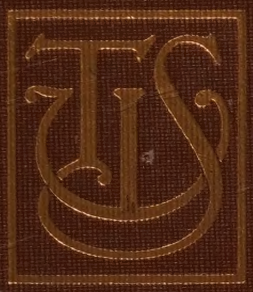
LETTERING

THOMAS WOOD STEVENS



SAMUEL GOLDWYN INC., LTD.
RESEARCH LIBRARY

Property of Lillian Michelson
LM 00011169

LILLIAN MICHELSON
RESEARCH LIBRARY
ZOETROPE STUDIOS
1040 NO. LAS PALMAS AVE.
HOLLYWOOD, CALIF. 90038
(213) 462-8884 OR 654-7177

LETTERING

THOMAS WOOD STEVENS

CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, PITTSBURGH

THE PRANG COMPANY

NEW YORK · CHICAGO · BOSTON · ATLANTA · DALLAS · TORONTO

SAMUEL GOLDWYN INC., LTD.
RESEARCH LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT, 1916
BY THOMAS WOOD STEVENS

PRANG LETTERING PENS

SPOONBILL PENS

Specially suited for modern, round, rapid lettering.
In three sizes; No. 2, No. 3 and No. 5.
Per dozen, No. 2, No. 3 or No. 5 in box . . . . . .
Per dozen, assorted in box . . . . . .

OLD ENGLISH TEXT PENS

Ideal for Black Letter and Old English Text Writing.
Three sizes; No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3.
Per One-quarter gross in box . . . . . .

PRANG WATERPROOF INDIA INK

A smooth flowing, dull, jet black ink. Dries without a gloss, and gives a rich, velvety, black surface.
Price of one-ounce Pen Holder Bottle . . . . . .

THE PRANG CO. NEW YORK · CHICAGO

FOREWORD

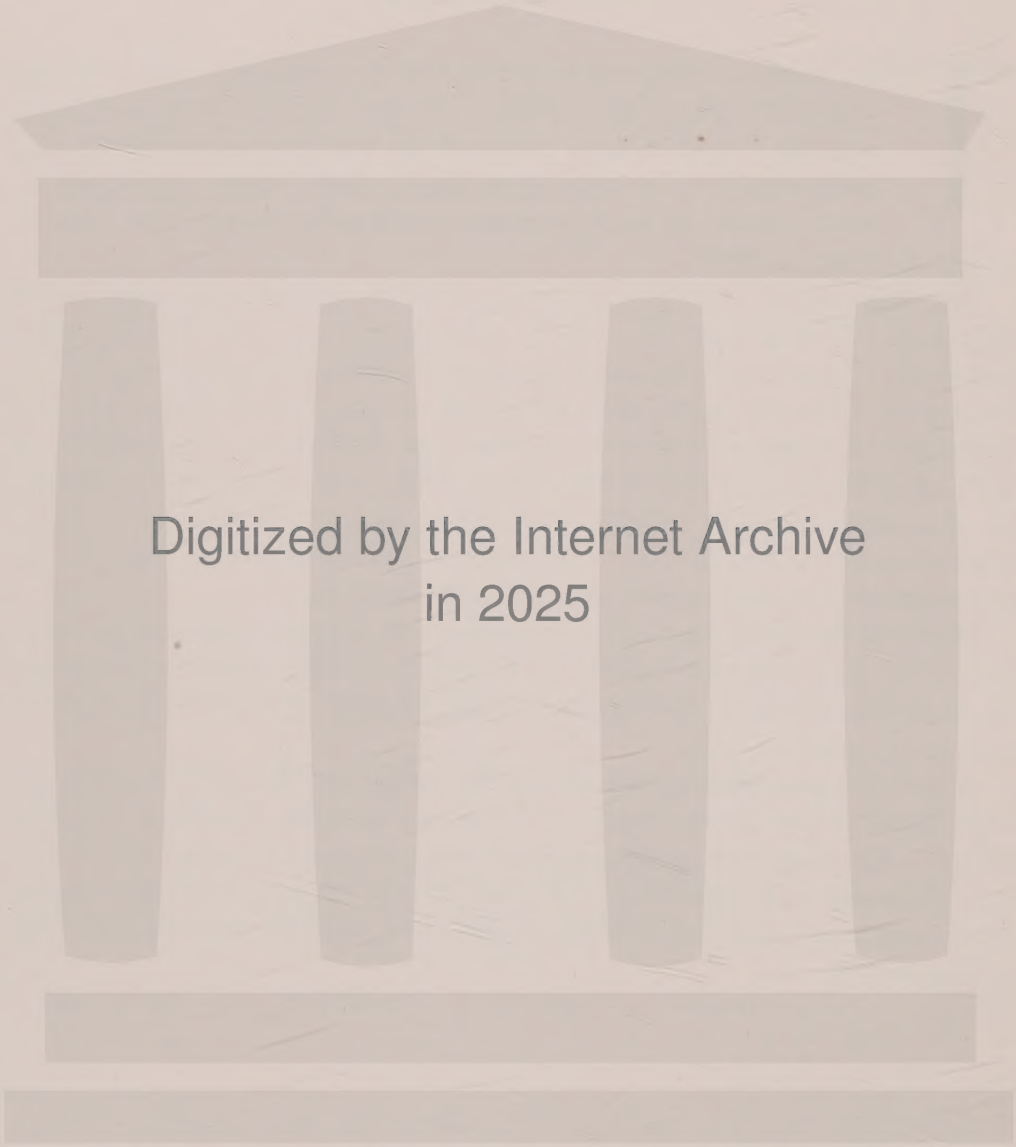
THIS book is designed to serve artists, craftsmen and students who have lettering to make. It presents no "system of sign-writing," and brings forward no mechanical method. Its intention is to present good standards in styles applicable to many fields of work, together with brief instructions regarding the drawing of letters.

The text matter is written primarily for the student; the experienced craftsman will not read it. He is only concerned with the examples presented. So we may set down the most elementary matters, explaining the uses of tools and materials, and giving an account of those historical conditions of work which have marked our alphabets. Our object, in short, is to develop the idea of lettering in relation to the element of design, the decorative element, which it contains, and to the historical phases which have made it what it is. Beyond this, we shall try to point out the best manner of executing and using the plainer forms.

Many of the drawings and certain parts of the text appeared in a previous work, now long out of print. The author is still grateful to the artists who contributed them, and newly grateful to those who have added fresh work to the present issue.

A special acknowledgment should be made to Mr. Harry Lawrence Gage, head of the Department of Printing, Carnegie Institute of Technology. Mr. Gage has applied himself to the making of many new drawings, diagrams and alphabets; has contributed many vital ideas to text and arrangement, and has brought to the work patience, learning and high craftsmanship.

T. W. S.


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/lettering0000unse_x7q2

CONTENTS

		PAGE
FOREWORD		5
CHAPTER		
I.	TOOLS AND MATERIALS	13
II.	THE DRAWING OF LETTERS	19
III.	ROMAN CAPITALS	27
IV.	ROMAN SMALL LETTERS	55
V.	ITALICS	81
VI.	THE GOTHIC FORMS	97
VII.	THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM	111
VIII.	PHASES OF LETTER DESIGN	117

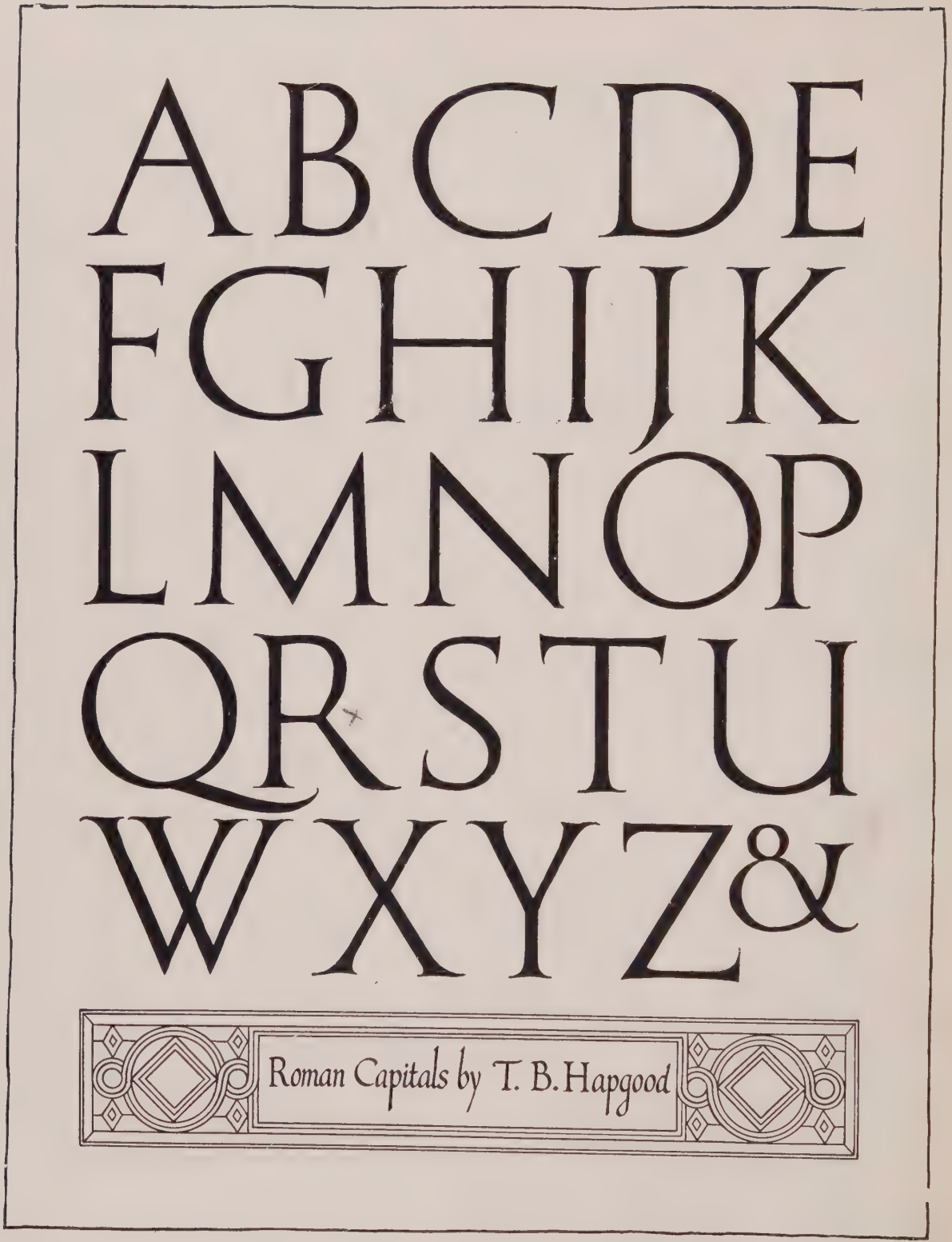
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Roman Capitals with a strong classical feeling. *By Theodore Brown Hapgood*	12
2.	Roman Capitals from Renaissance sources. *By Harry Lawrence Gage*	15
3.	Head-piece. *By Charles H. Barnard*	16
4.	Proportions of margins and plan of ruling for book-opening and single sheet	17
5.	Modern Roman Capitals. *By Charles H. Barnard*	18
6.	Title page showing a written letter in relation to pen drawing. *By Walter Crane*	20
7–11.	Diagram showing progressive steps in drawing and inking	22
12.	Diagram for opening	23
13.	Roman capitals written with a wide pen. *By Harry Lawrence Gage*	24
14.	Italic "swash" letters founded on sixteenth century Italian work	25
15.	Roman Capitals adapted from coins and medals. *By T. W. S.*	26
16.	The formation of the serif by right and left chisel cuts in an incised Roman	28
17.	Diagram showing structural differences between letters of similar shape	29
18.	Modern Roman Capitals. *By Harry E. Townsend*	31
19.	Modern Roman Capitals. *By William A. Dwiggins*	33
20.	Modern Roman Capitals. *By F. G. Cooper*	35
21.	Modern Outline Roman Capitals. *By Guido Rosa*	36
22.	Heavy square-serif Roman Capitals. *By Harry Lawrence Gage*	37
23.	Capitals after Charles Robinson	38
24.	Capitals and Numerals adapted from modern German sources. *By Ned Hadley*	39
25.	Modern Capitals and Numerals from French sources. *By Ned Hadley*	40
26.	Modern German Capitals. *By Helen E. Hartford*	41
27.	Variations of the modern German. *By Helen E. Hartford*	42
28.	Accented modern German Capitals. *By Helen E. Hartford*	43
29.	Outline Capitals in relation to architectural rendering. *By Rudolph von Larish*	44
30.	Heavy modern Roman Capitals. *By Norman P. Hall*	45
31.	Capitals derived from small letter forms. *By T. W. S.*	46
32.	Capitals and small letters influenced by the Japanese. *By Harry Lawrence Gage*	47
33.	Roman Capitals and small letters written with a wide pen. *By George W. Koch*	48
34.	Modern Capitals, small letters, and numerals designed for use in cut stencils. *By Forrest C. Crooks*	49
35.	Roman Capitals and small letters. *By William A. Dwiggins*	50
36.	Modern Roman Capitals and small letters. *By Oswald Cooper*	51
37.	Small book pages, showing freely written capitals. *By William A. Dwiggins*	52
38.	Modern Capitals, small letters, and italics. *By Egbert G. Jacobson*	53
39.	Roman small letters and numerals. *By T. W. S.*	54
40.	Pen-drawn imitation of classic manuscript showing Uncial characteristics	55
41.	Modern small letters. *By Charles H. Barnard*	57
42.	Diagram showing the ruling of guide lines for the construction of small letters	58
43.	Diagram showing construction of part-round small letters	58
44.	Diagram showing methods of varying the small letters	59
45.	Diagram showing the direction of strokes in writing small letters	60
46.	Small letters written with a wide pen. *By Harry Lawrence Gage*	61

47. Announcement in Roman small letters, showing close spacing between lines. *By Charles H. Barnard* . . . 63
48. Announcement in heavy Roman small letters. *By Oswald Cooper* . . . 64
49. Heavy Capitals, small letters, and numerals, adapted to wood block and linoleum cutting. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 65
50. Modern Roman small letters. *By F. G Cooper* . . . 66
51. Modern small letters. *By Harry E. Townsend* . . . 67
52. Cover design on rough paper. *By Will Ransom* . . . 68
53. Heavy modern small letters. *By Norman P. Hall* . . . 69
54. Small letters *after Charles Robinson* . . . 70
55. Modern German written linked small letters . . . 71
56. Unaccented and accented alphabets and numerals, designed for rapid use. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 72
57. Modern Capitals and small letters influenced by Venetian type designs . . . 73
58. Capitals and small letters for informal inscriptions. *By James Hall* . . . 74
59. Free small letters after the modern German. *By Helen E. Hartford* . . . 75
60. Modern German linked small letters . . . 76
61. Incised English script. *By Frank Chouteau Brown* . . . 78
62. Italic Capitals. *By T. W. S.* . . . 79
63. Italic small letters. *By T. W. S.* . . . 80
64. Italic-script Capitals and small letters. *By Lawrence Rosa* . . . 81
65. Italic Capitals, extreme slant. *By T. W. S.* . . . 82
66. Italic Capitals and small letters. *By M. Elizabeth Colwell* . . . 83
67. Italics with flourished Capitals. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 84
68. Modern German script-italics . . . 85
69. Italic Capitals, small letters, and numerals. *By Norman P. Hall* . . . 86
70. Modern German Italic Capitals, small letters, and numerals . . . 87
71. Caslon Oldstyle Italic Type, No. 471 . . . 88
72. Cloister Italic Type . . . 89
73. Pabst Italic Type . . . 90
74. Black-letter Capitals and small letters. *By Albert Dürer, 1500* . . . 92
75. Black letter written with a wide pen. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 93
76. Modern German Round Gothic capitals, small letters and numerals . . . 94
77. Cloister Black Type . . . 95
78. Uncial Capitals with narrow Gothic small letters *From a 14th Century Ms.* . . . 96
79. Uncial (Lombardic) Gothic Capitals. *By Fred Stearns* . . . 97
80. Italian Gothic Capitals. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 98
81. Original variations on a Gothic Alphabet. *By Charles H. Barnard* . . . 99
82. English Gothic Capitals and small letters. *By Frank Chouteau Brown* . . . 100
83. Gothic Capitals and small letters. *By Harry Lawrence Gage* . . . 101
84. Design in Gothics. *By M. Elizabeth Colwell* . . . 102
85. Cover design showing an interesting use of italics. *By Will Bradley* . . . 103
86–92. Rough notes for a title page. *By T. W. S.* . . . 106–108
93. Monograms. *By E. A. Turbayne* . . . 111
94. An example of combined letters and monograms in a title . . . 113
95. Cover design in the Georgian style. *By Will Bradley* . . . 114
96. Lettering with border. *By Frederick W. Goudy* . . . 115
97. Humanistic Type. *By William Dana Orcutt* . . . 116
98. Caslon Oldstyle Roman Type, No. 471 . . . 117
99. Forum Type. *By Frederick W. Goudy* . . . 118
100. Kennerley Oldstyle Type. *By Frederick W. Goudy* . . . 119
101. Pabst Oldstyle Type . . . 120
102. Cloister Oldstyle Type . . . 121

LETTERING

FIGURE 1



THEODORE BROWN HAPGOOD

Roman Capitals with a strong classical feeling

LETTERING

CHAPTER I

Tools and Materials

IN LETTERING, as in any other task requiring skill, the abstract matters of style and principle are difficult to remember unless they are immediately put in practice. Good tools with which to work, and respect for them, must be assumed at the outset.

The necessary implements for good lettering include only a pencil, ruler, pen and ink. But as the accuracy of the work depends on accurate guide lines, a drawing board, T-square and triangle should also be included in the equipment; they save time, and give to the student a desirable sense of security. A water-color brush and some moist white are useful for correcting; and orange-vermilion water color for rubrication. One should see to it that the drawing table is firm, and so placed that the paper is well lighted; this is important, since the drawing of letters requires an exacting use of the eye sight, and should be undertaken only under good lighting conditions. Ruling pens, dividers, and other draftsman's instruments are sometimes convenient, but seldom necessary.

The kind of pen best suited to the student's personal use can only be determined by experiment. It must be fine enough to make letters of the size desired, but not fine enough to cut into the paper, and not too stiff. Annealing in the flame of a match or a gas jet will usually make a stiff pen flexible enough. Wide pointed pens are frequently useful for large letters and directly written forms. The question is one for trial rather than prescription; some artists succeed in making beautiful letters with a broken tooth-pick.

A water-color brush that comes to a fine point when dampened is good for inking large letters, but requires much practice for small work; it may be used with advantage on heavy-faced letters more than an inch high. The edge of a brush stroke is smoother than a pen line, so that brush letters, when much reduced by engraving, are likely

to show a mechanical character. Where the work is large and heavy, however, the brush covers the ground much faster than the pen.

Any paper with surface hard enough to take ink without blotting may be used. The rougher the paper, the rougher the line; also, as a rule, the stronger in character. For accurate, formal lettering, and for practice work, where close study of the drawing is desirable, hard-surfaced bristol board is best. The heavy, sized hand-made papers, such as Whatman, serve many purposes. The paper should take pencilling well, stand many erasures, and carry ink without spreading.

Drawing pencils should be free from grit, and the degree of hardness should be adapted in measure to the size of the work in hand, hard pencils being used for small forms, and softer ones for large. Very soft pencils tend to produce quick effects, but inaccurate drawing; too hard leads give a thin and stringy appearance that sometimes persists, in the shape of angular and unsympathetic edges, after the inking is done.

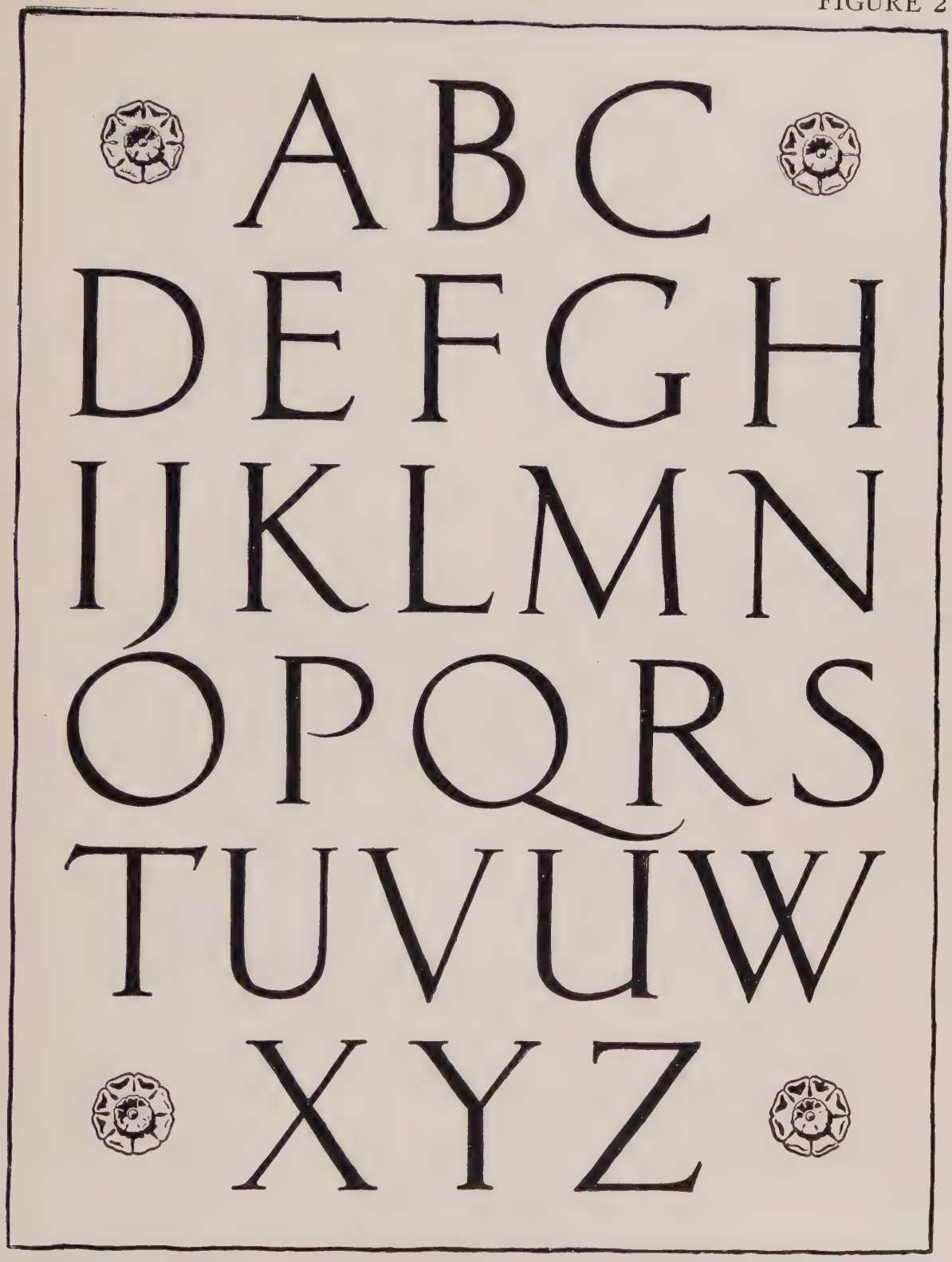
Any of the carbon drawing inks, or hand-ground India ink, will serve. The fluid must stay black on the thinnest line, and must flow with freedom. Where work must be lingered over, and may suffer from moist hands, water-proof India ink has obvious advantages.

Orange-vermilion water color may be substituted for ink where letters in red are needed. It may be applied with a brush, or used as ink, the pen being filled from the brush as it becomes dry. Red characters made in this way have a good body of opaque color, and serve as well as black for engraving.

Good hand-drawn letters may be put to a great variety of uses. The most common of these as well as one of the most exacting, is drawing for reproduction by the ordinary zinc process. If a student learns to execute a good piece of work for this purpose, he will probably have mastered all the practical difficulties. Hence, in the following pages, attention will be given to methods adapted to ultimate use on the printing press, in the belief that other necessary points will be covered in this way. If you know a given letter thoroughly, and can draw it acceptably a half-inch high, you need only a little practice to put it on a sign or a black-board with equal facility.

In using the tools named for the purposes suggested, it is well that the student understand one fact: all lettering may be divided, according to the method of its making, into two classes — *built-up*

FIGURE 2



HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Roman Capitals from Renaissance sources. Small letters to correspond are shown in Figure 39.

lettering and *written* lettering. Most of the work which finds its way to the printed page is of the built-up variety. This means that the individual forms have been drawn with the pencil, and then carefully filled in with ink. The written variety is that done either directly with the ink, or carried out in single strokes over pencil indications; it is obviously the more rapid, informal and difficult sort. The written style comes down to us from the calligrapher; the built-up from the engraver. For purposes of study it is obviously best to begin with the built-up letter, since in this the attention is concentrated on patient drawing, learning the precise form, rather than upon freedom of stroke and energy of style.

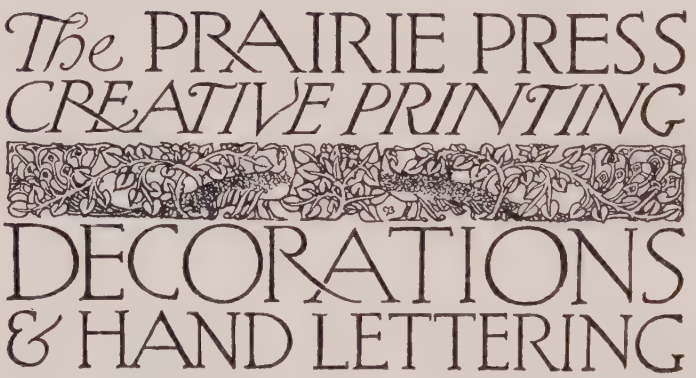
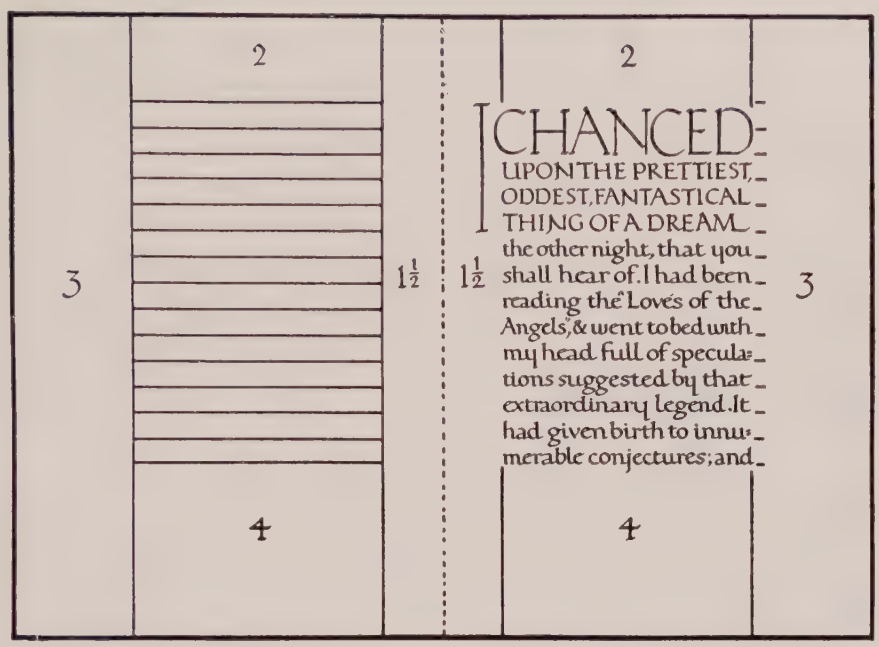


FIGURE 3

CHARLES H. BARNARD

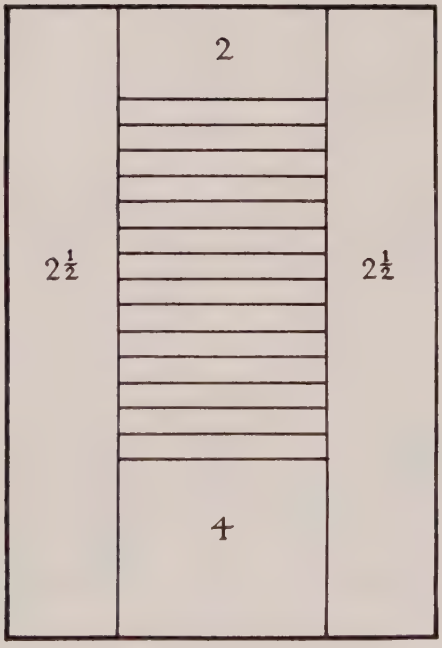


Verso page *Recto page*

The recto page illustrates a method of commencing a book in capitals conforming to the writing lines. The lines may be indented with a stylus or ruled with a hard lead pencil.

POETRY may appropriately be given slightly wider margins than prose.

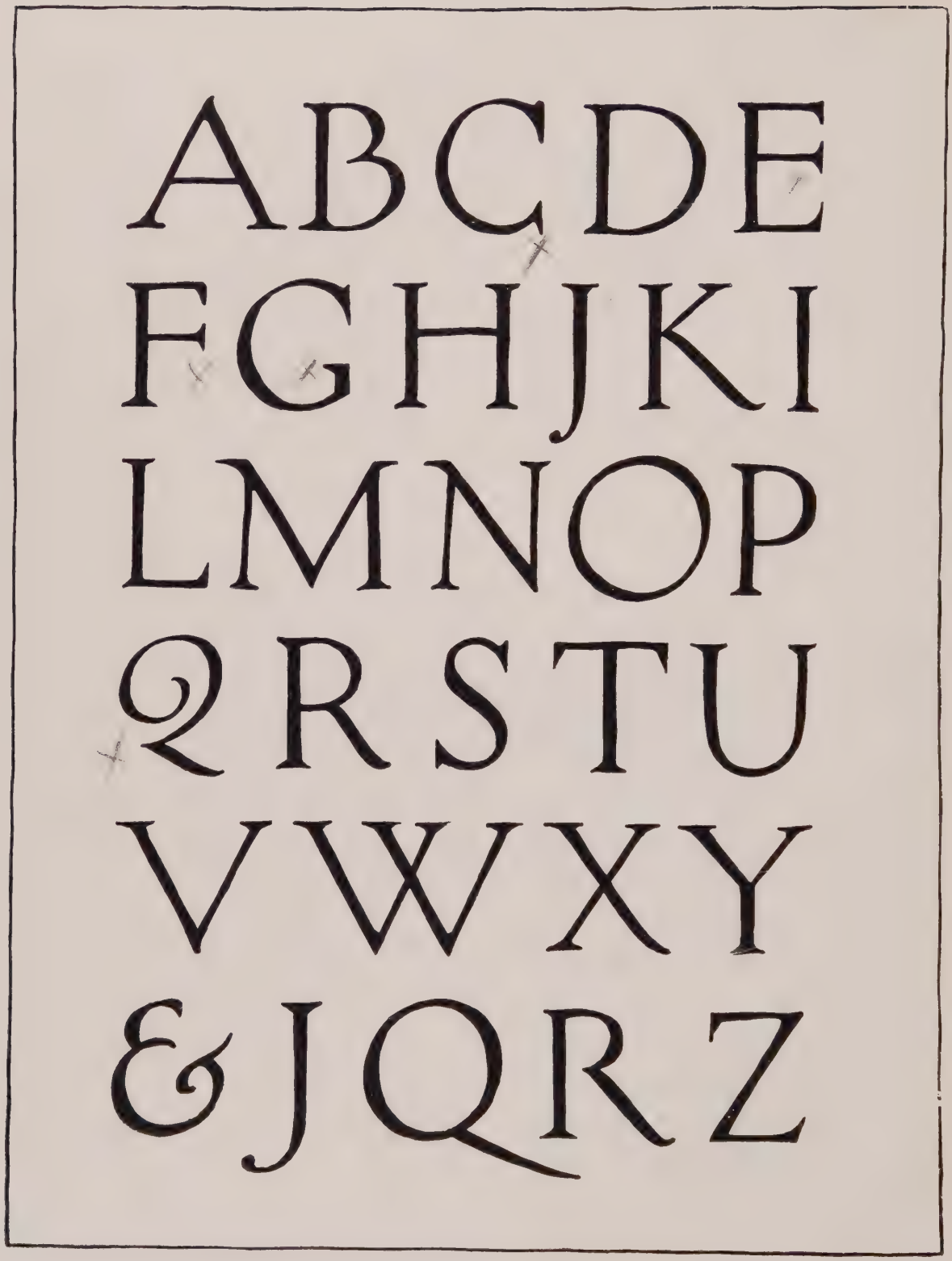
"FINE" writing, the lines of which are usually widely spaced, demands wider margins than "massed" writing, which is heavy & has the lines closely packed.



PERCY J. SMITH

Proportions of margins and plan of ruling for book-opening and single sheet.

FIGURE 5



CHARLES H. BARNARD

Modern Roman Capitals. For small letters see Figure 41

CHAPTER II

The Drawing of Letters

THE beginner should bear in mind that he is not called upon to *design* letters. That part of it is done — has been done for centuries.

The alphabet is a series of shapes which have meaning and use because we all recognize them. Meaning and use are taken away when these shapes are changed and tortured out of our immediate recognition. While it may of course be possible to improve these forms the student does well to consider how many great designers have accepted them as they are. But to use letters they must be drawn, and to do this their forms must first be learned. Thus the problem is simplified. You have only to learn them and draw them.

It is an excellent practice to draw the letters in the formations of words, rather than as alphabets. The simplest task of all, then, is to draw one word. We will assume for the sake of illustration that the word is "POEMS"; that it is to fit into a title page, and that it may be, in the drawing, about an inch high. Further we will assume that it is to be done in capitals of Renaissance Roman style.

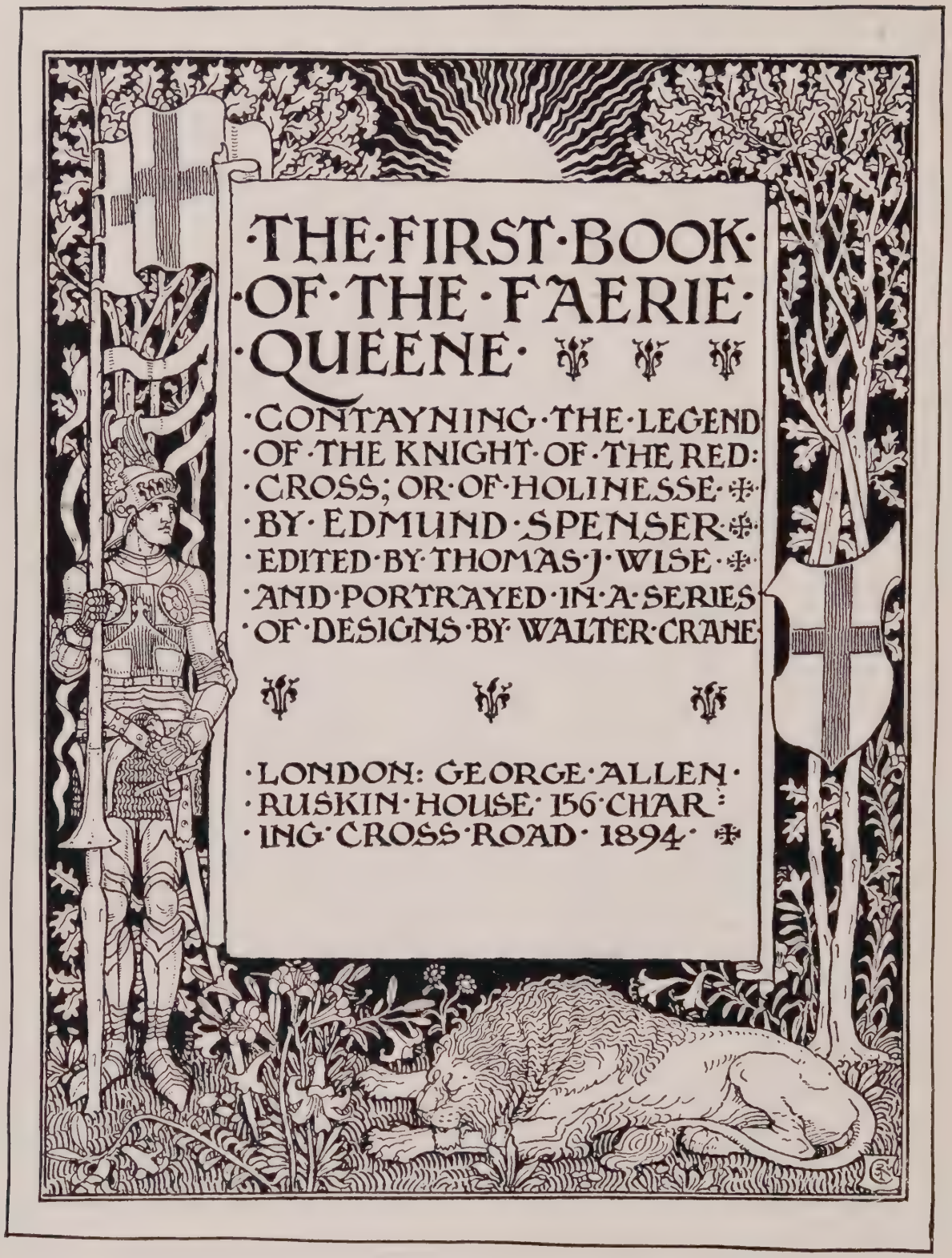
We have here the copy, or letters to be executed; the size, and the style of letter. Turning to Figure 2, we find an alphabet from which, for the present, we may be content to accept the letter forms, limiting ourselves to the questions of drawing, spacing and inking.

With the T-square, pencil accurate horizontal guide lines one inch apart and at least five inches long. Into this space the work is to be fitted.

Now draw a few verticals, free-hand, between the guides. If these are not accurate, when tested by the triangle, it means that some practice of this sort will be necessary. Meanwhile, draw at random a few true verticals with the triangle, and referring to Figure 2 for the forms, sketch in the letters of the word.

The mechanical verticals will be of no assistance in spacing, but they will afford, at intervals, a convenient guide, and will prevent the sketched letters from acquiring a slant in either direction. Draw very loosely at

FIGURE 6



WALTER CRANE

Title page showing a written letter in relation to pen drawing

first, and feel for the position of the letters, rather than for their precise form. This having been done carefully, the work will resemble Figure 7.

Examine the word at this stage for possible errors in drawing. See that you have allowed each letter a proper width, according to the alphabet chosen — not each letter the same width. See that the heavy strokes are all of the same thickness, the light strokes similarly uniform. Examine the word as a whole, but remember that the drawing must be done one letter at a time.

Clear away the superfluous lines, draw out the curves and serifs (the serifs are the little cross lines that define the ends of the strokes) with care, and you have something like Figure 8. This pencilling should at first be done with great care. Upon it will depend the accuracy of the final work, and any errors will only be increased in the inking.

Assuming that you have drawn the letters carefully, and spaced them reasonably, the word is ready to be inked. Here you must pause and consider carefully: have you drawn the letters so that the inside of the enclosed space represents the form, or the outside? Test one of your letters by carefully blackening it over with the pencil; it is very likely to appear too heavy. This gives one a clue to the reason for not inking the outlines first and filling in the spaces afterward. The fact is that the eye can with difficulty make an accurate judgment while it must add together the width of the outlines and the white space enclosed, and compare the sum with the sum in the next letter.

In inking built-up letters, begin with a full rough stroke between the outlines; this, since it does not reach the bounds on either side, cannot be far wrong. From this stroke, work out to one of the edges, drawing the loose ends of your lines inside, and working the wet ink against the one edge you are striving to correct. When you have reached this edge, you should have it fairly true, since all the work of filling the black space has been in the direction of correcting the first rough line. Now work toward the other edge, correcting in the same way, and being vigilant lest the stroke as a whole become too wide. (See Figure 9.)

If you have difficulty in drawing the right hand edges true, and are working on a small board, turn the board around. Bear in mind all the time that you are drawing to fill and correct the first stroke, and that you have the pencil line for a guide the while. The only error you can logically make, barring accidents, is to get the stroke too wide, and against this you are doubly warned.

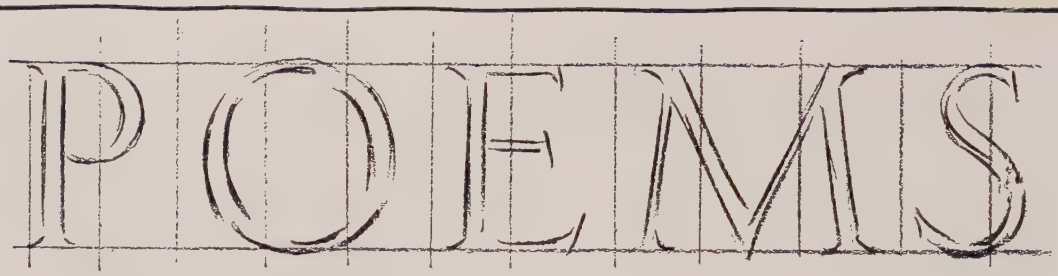


FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8

POEMS

FIGURE 9

POEMS

FIGURE 10

POEMS

FIGURE 11

Diagram showing progressive steps in drawing and inking. Lettering should be inked by masses and edges — not by outlines. Lower line shows the effect of lettering on rough paper

When the stroke is done, go on to the next, finishing up each letter as you go. After much practice you may find it more rapid to leave all the serifs to be finished at once, with the board in a convenient position. When beginning, with only one word to do, finish as you go, but refer continually to the first letter, making no stroke thicker than the vertical elements in that.

When the ink is dry, and the pencil lines cleared away, you have something resembling Figure 10. The same pencilling, inked loosely on rough paper, will give something like Figure 11.

Thus far we have considered only the problem of drawing the letters, and have said nothing about their principles and characteristics. The drawing should be, for the present, only a method of study, the matter of which begins with the next chapter.

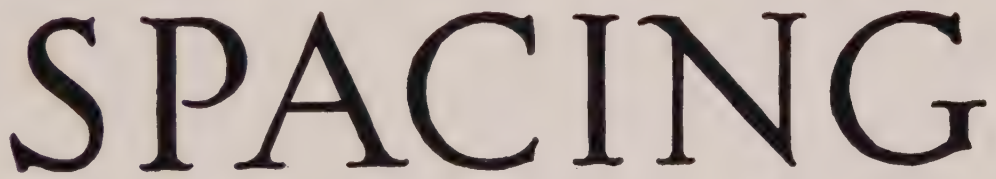
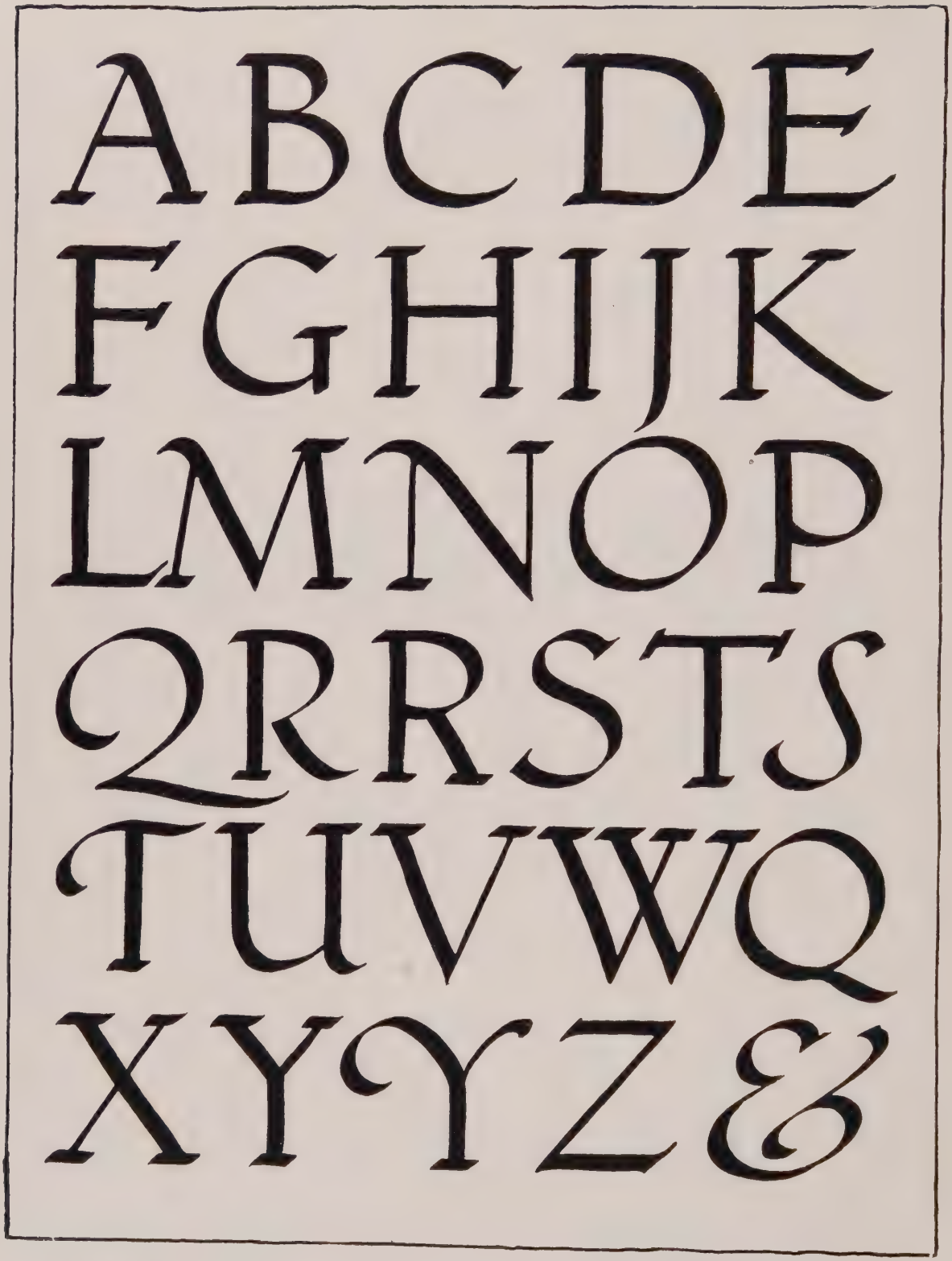


FIGURE 12

FIGURE 13



HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Roman Capitals written with a wide pen. *For small letters see Figure 46*

EXAMPLES OF DECORATIVE WRITING.

Lines of writing may be widely spaced to allow for long ascending & descending strokes. The serifs should be strongly marked & those in the top & foot margins may be flourished.

Upright writing may be treated similarly, but the letters should be shaped more precisely. Serifs may be formed as in this example.

Italic "swash" letters founded on sixteenth century Italian work

FIGURE 15

T. W. S.

Roman Capitals adapted from coins and medals

CHAPTER III

Roman Capitals

MOST modern work in lettering requires the use of Roman capitals, and since all the other forms the student is called upon to draw are descended from these capitals, the study of letter forms should begin with them. A few facts about the history of the Roman letter should be understood, since these facts bear directly on the drawing of the letters, and explain some characteristics that might otherwise seem arbitrary or puzzling.

The Roman capital form was taken over, with some radical changes, from the Greek, and was used by the Latin scribes in copying great libraries during and after the Augustan age. It varied, under this use, as widely as hand-writing varies in any period; but it served for the ready production of clear copy in the ancient manner, without punctuation or separation of words.

The scribes wrote with soft reeds, dipped in ink and held vertically. The reed was sharpened to a flat or chisel point. This determined the direction of the heavy strokes in each letter, making the first (upward) stroke of the A light, the second (downward) heavy, the cross-bar (horizontal) light, and so on through the alphabet. This distribution of heavy and light strokes, of which we shall have occasion to speak further, was finally determined by the practice of the reed, and the student has only to learn it, since he cannot abrogate it.

As written with the reed, the style of the letters varied widely. But when the Roman builders, with their strong sense of the monumental and significant, took the letter and spread it in stately inscriptions on triumphal arches, it took a character from the stone, crystallizing into a marble perfection. And because you cannot draw a V-shaped incision in stone to a square end that will define itself by its shadow, as a monument letter must do, the classic craftsman added the serif. This was at first a simple chisel cut across, following the scratched guide-lines, and defining the end of the stroke. But the serif soon came to be made of two minor incisions

FIGURE 16. *The formation of the serif by right and left chisel cuts in an incised Roman*

(see Figure 16) and to have a certain proportion to the letter itself. Thus another lasting characteristic was added to the Roman form.

To make their letters carry by shadows, the Roman stonecutters sometimes cut their outlines very wide. The craftsmen of the Renaissance, using the letter more intimately, in metal and on works of smaller scale, remedied this. So the record runs: the Roman letter was evolved from the Greek; the Roman scribes gave it its typical design, and settled the direction of its accents; the Roman builders gave it its serifs, and a more severe architectural form; the Renaissance craftsmen gave it delicacy of drawing and freedom of application; and from them it came into the craft of printing, almost as soon as the new craft had birth.

By making a few letters with a broad stub pen, one can easily trace the effect of the flat-pointed reed on the direction of the accented strokes. It is clear that the reed made rules for the writer; when the letter took its place in inscriptions, no alteration from these rules was possible. The accent had become part of the style.

The principles of accent are these:

All horizontal strokes are light.

All strokes sloping upward from left to right are light, except the middle stroke of the letter Z. (In this case the reed had to be turned, and the stroke was really made downward from right to left.)

All strokes drawn downward with the reed are heavy. These include all strokes which slope downward from left to right, and all vertical strokes except the verticals of the N and the first vertical of the M (which were originally drawn upward).

The swell or accent on a curved stroke follows the general principle, the O, for example, being heavy on the sides and light across the top and bottom.

The old alphabets contain no special form for the J and U. In supplying them we follow the principle, making the first stroke of the U downward (heavy) and the second upward (light).

Thus the ancient manner of drawing them gives us an exact principle for accenting the letters. Similarly, if one bears in mind the origin of the serif, one is likely to draw it with some grace, giving it the sharp distinction of the chiselled cut, and rounding it into the vertical without awkward angles or undue mass.

FIGURE 17. *Diagram showing structural differences between letters of similar shape*

The serif gives to the letters in each line a common base — insisting upon the uniformity of the foundation. The fact that each letter has at least one heavy stroke, and that these strokes are placed in a definite and recurring relation to the light strokes, tends to give a formal harmony to the inscription as a whole. Beyond this, the width of each letter is determined by its shape — by considerations of design. Certain mechanical contrivances, the typewriter, for example, may require that each letter approach as nearly as possible to the same width; the result is always to the disadvantage of the style.

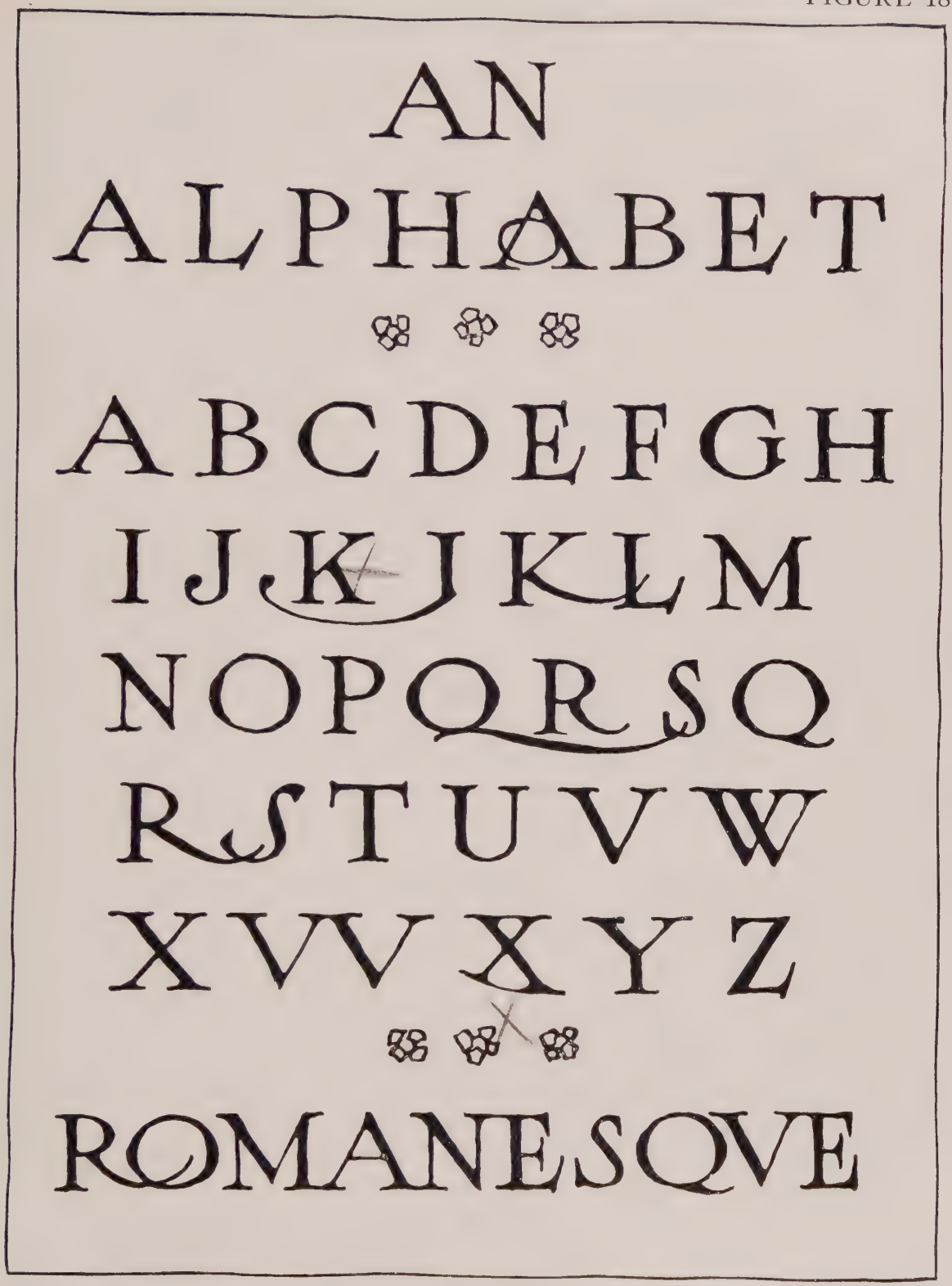
If we cease to look at the letters as symbols, but as twenty-six repeating elements in a curious band of design, we see at once that each should be given space according to its degree of complication, the interest of its shape, and its value as a rhythmic part of the whole.

There is no criterion above the practice of the great designers to determine the space due to each shape, so that each letter shall have a reasonable width for its characteristic form. For the Roman letter, Durer, Della Robbia, Serlio, and a thousand nameless craftsmen of the past five centuries, have worked out and judged the proper proportion.

From the best work we note a general classification of letter widths.

Thus letters which divide horizontally the space they occupy, enclosing or partially enclosing areas about half their height, are narrow; this includes B, E, F, K, P, R, and S. Looking at them as design elements, this is easily explained, since these small enclosed areas should obviously not be allowed to take shapes at variance with the general shape of the band. The lobes of the B, if the letter were drawn wide, would cease to bear any harmonious relation to the similar but larger shape of the D. The K and R, by the extension of the swash tails, may be made to fill a wide space where needed, however. The I, L, and J are also classed as narrow, though the I and J always require, in use, a little extra white space at each side.

W and M are extra wide. All others are of full width, though not mechanically equal. The round letters, C, D, G, O and Q, should always be given full width to avoid cramping their generous curves; the variations of the others from the O are indicated in Figure 17. Each develops, in the best lettering, its own curve, adapted to its own shape but consonant with the other curves in the alphabet. These round letters have the advantage of spacing closely, to make up in part for the ample width they require within themselves.



HARRY E. TOWNSEND

Modern Roman Capitals. For small letters see Figure 56.

In height also a slight variation is necessary. A sharp point, such as the base of the V, will not seem to reach the base line unless it is actually drawn slightly beyond it. On account of this appearance — a mere optical illusion — the A (except where a serif is provided at the top), M, N, V and W all cross the guide lines at their points. The same is true in a less degree of the round letters. But the effect must be executed with care; only a slight extension is required to correct the appearance when the guide lines are erased.

Good Roman lettering has a strong sense of stability; this is sometimes subtly increased by certain details in the drawing, such as rounding the horizontal into the vertical at the base of the D, and leaving the upper junction square inside; a similar step being taken with the E, L, and B.

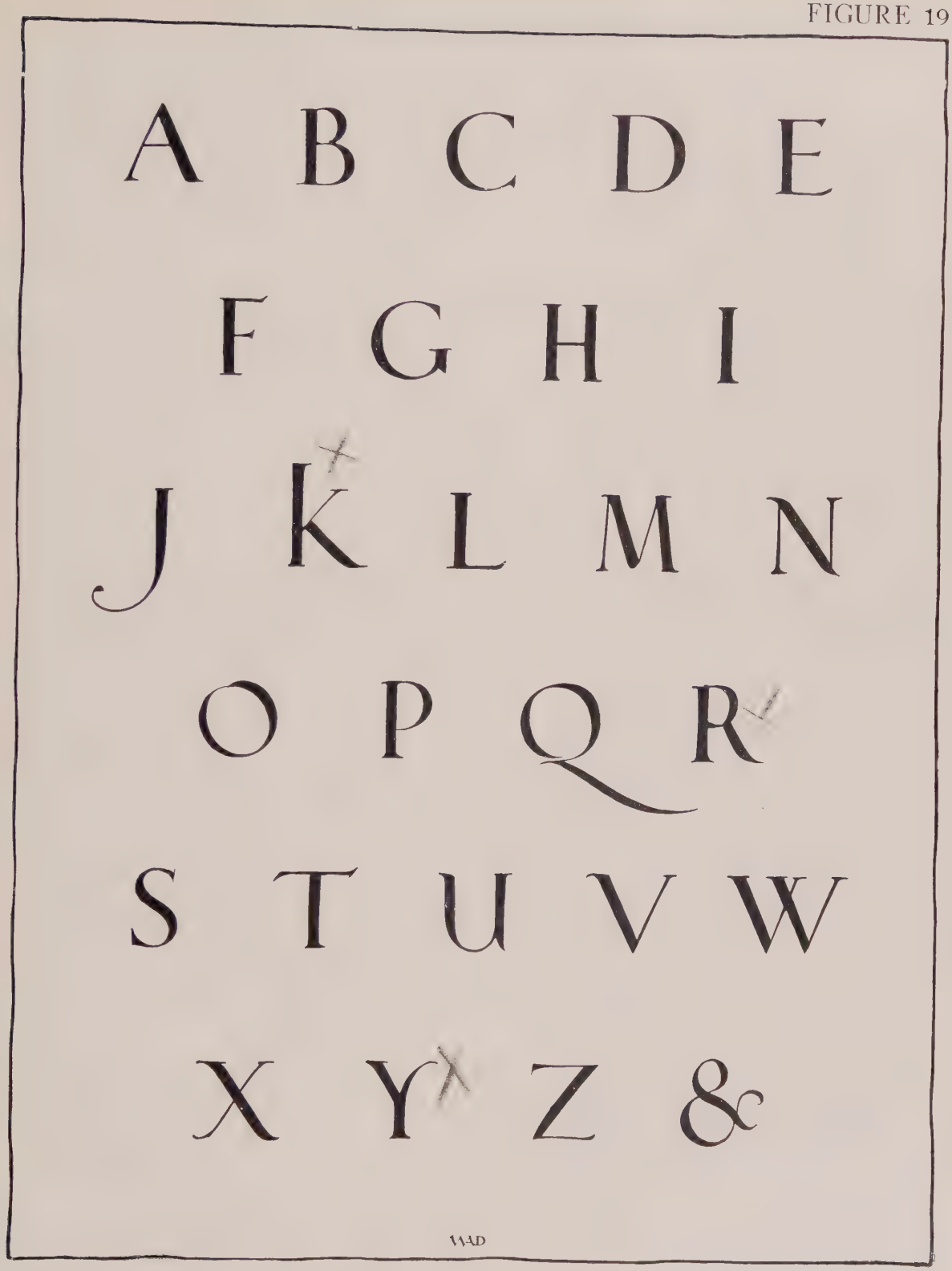
An examination of any of the formal alphabets will show that the distribution of heavy and light strokes provided for by tradition will never allow two heavy strokes to be joined without the intervention of a light one (as in the K, where the swash tail takes off from the light upward stroke, not from the vertical). This effectively prevents any spot of black being heavier than the downward stroke, and maintains an even "color" throughout an inscription.

For the exact proportions and forms of the letters, one must study, drawing and re-drawing, the best models. In these it may be noted that the width of the heavy stroke is about one-tenth the height of the letter, the light element being two-fifths to one-half as wide as the heavy one. Mechanical measurements are of little value. The student should be able to judge for himself the best proportions, and should practice until this judgment comes easily to him.

The correct spacing of formal Roman capitals requires the utmost care, since here again there is no mechanical method. The space between the letters of a word should be judged by the area of white, not by the distance along the guide lines. This area varies in shape, and the eye takes account of the irregular intervals by averaging them roughly. Imagine the letters raised and a viscous fluid poured between them; the shapes it might cover, never running into the corners nor invading far the narrow openings, would be the effective areas of white. Figure 12 illustrates the point. The single stroke letters, I and J, require extra space; the round ones can be closely fitted; the normal space falling where two vertical-sided letters come together.

The space between words should be about the width of the narrow

FIGURE 19



WILLIAM A. DWIGGINS

Modern Roman Capitals — a very personal alphabet

letters; but if the letters within the words are loosely spaced, this must be considerably increased. The wider the spacing, both of letters and words, the more white must be left between lines. If the spacing is close, one may bring the lines as close together as one-fifth their height.

The conditions of the problem usually determine the length of the line; the number of words in each line is determined by the copy, or wording to be lettered. It remains for the designer to determine the size, or height, of the letter to be used. In Roman capitals, the height may be roughly estimated by dividing the length by the number of letters — that is, allowing a square for each letter and space. This does not work out exactly, however. If not many narrow letters occur in the copy, it may prove necessary to reduce the height of the line. In fact, the student should bear in mind that the height of the line determines the practicability of any given arrangement, and that it is better to change it at once than to spend hours in a vain effort to make thirty letters go where there is room for only twenty.

In drawing a long inscription, you have of course the advantage of a naturally flexible medium; each individual character may be imperceptibly narrowed or widened, and its form may, within certain limits, be changed to fit the space. In an informal inscription it is quite permissible, for instance, to save space where an A follows an L, by taking up the foot of the A and moving it bodily to the left until the raised foot overlaps the base of the L. Other combinations are shown in Figure 101.

In taking liberties with the forms of the letters, for the sake of a more compact spacing, one is only following the tradition of the Roman, and nothing new is likely to result. One of the charms of old lettering is its freedom. Many of the results of this spontaneous craftsmanship are no longer useful, since the eye of the reader has become so accustomed to the regularity of type that the freer and more unusual forms are no longer legible.

When formal Roman capitals are called for, the inscription is usually important enough to make necessary a high standard of execution. Hence practice work in solid capitals has a special value. The form of the letters, making a rectangular shape of each word, shows that no looseness of arrangement will be appropriate. The difficulty of rendering the letters free-hand should always be frankly met; and in practice it is best to work out a specific inscription, to fit a particular space, and to attack it as though for actual use.

AFOOT AND
LIGHT-HEARTED I

TAKE TO THE OPEN ROAD, HEALTHY, FREE THE WORLD BEFORE ME, THE LONG BROWN PATH BEFORE ME, LEADING WHEREVER I CHOOSE. HENCEFORTH I ASK NOT GOOD FORTUNE—I AM GOOD FORTUNE, HENCEFORTH I WHIMPER NO MORE POSTPONE NO MORE NEED NOTHING STRONG AND CONTENT I TRAVEL THE OPEN ROAD *Whitman*

THE 91ST PSALM
REPRINTED FROM
THE KING JAMES
VERSION

MCMVI

HE THAT DWELLETH IN THE SECRET place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

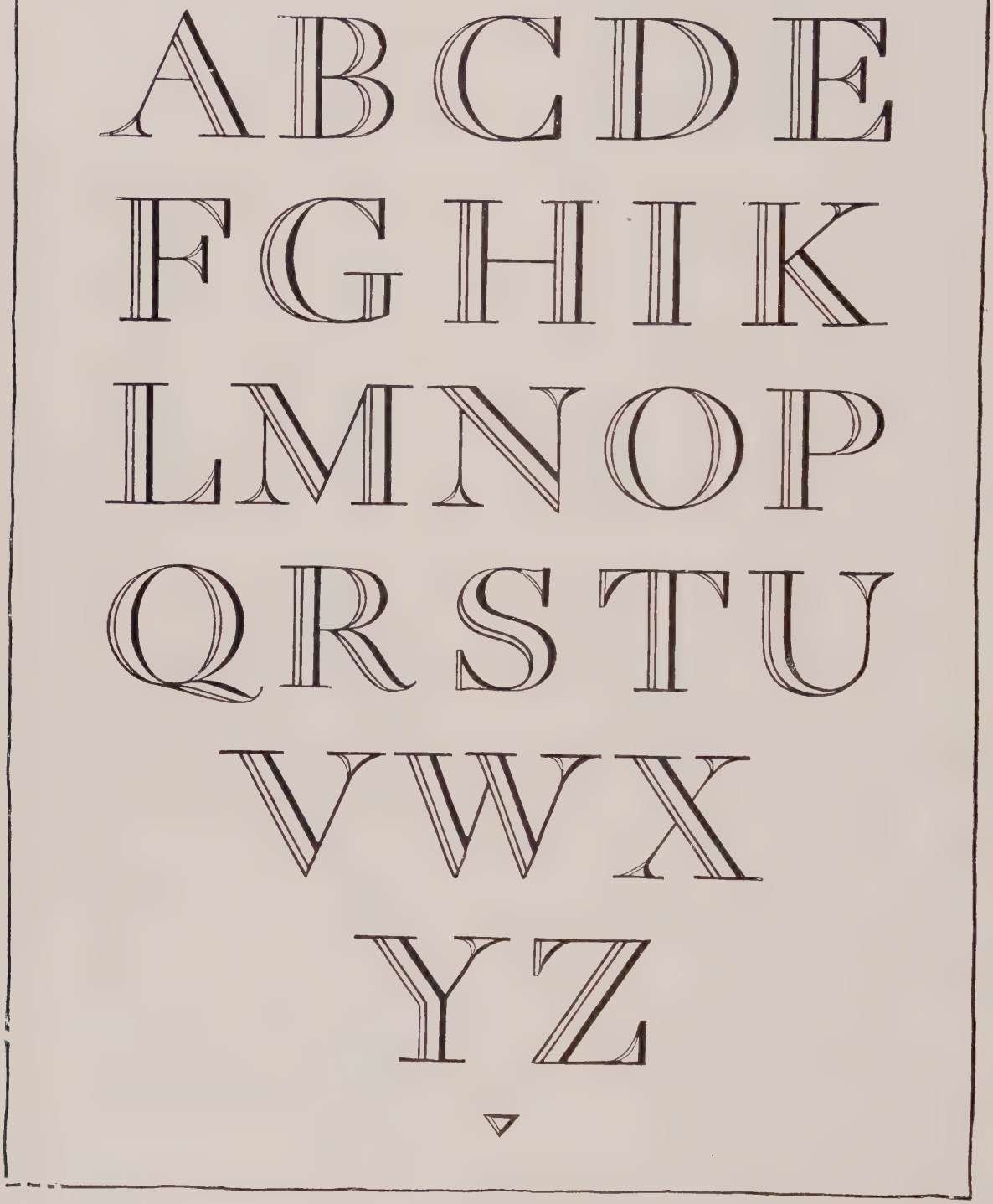
I Will say of the LORD He is my refuge & my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

SUrely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

WILLIAM A. DWIGGINS

Small book pages, showing freely written capitals

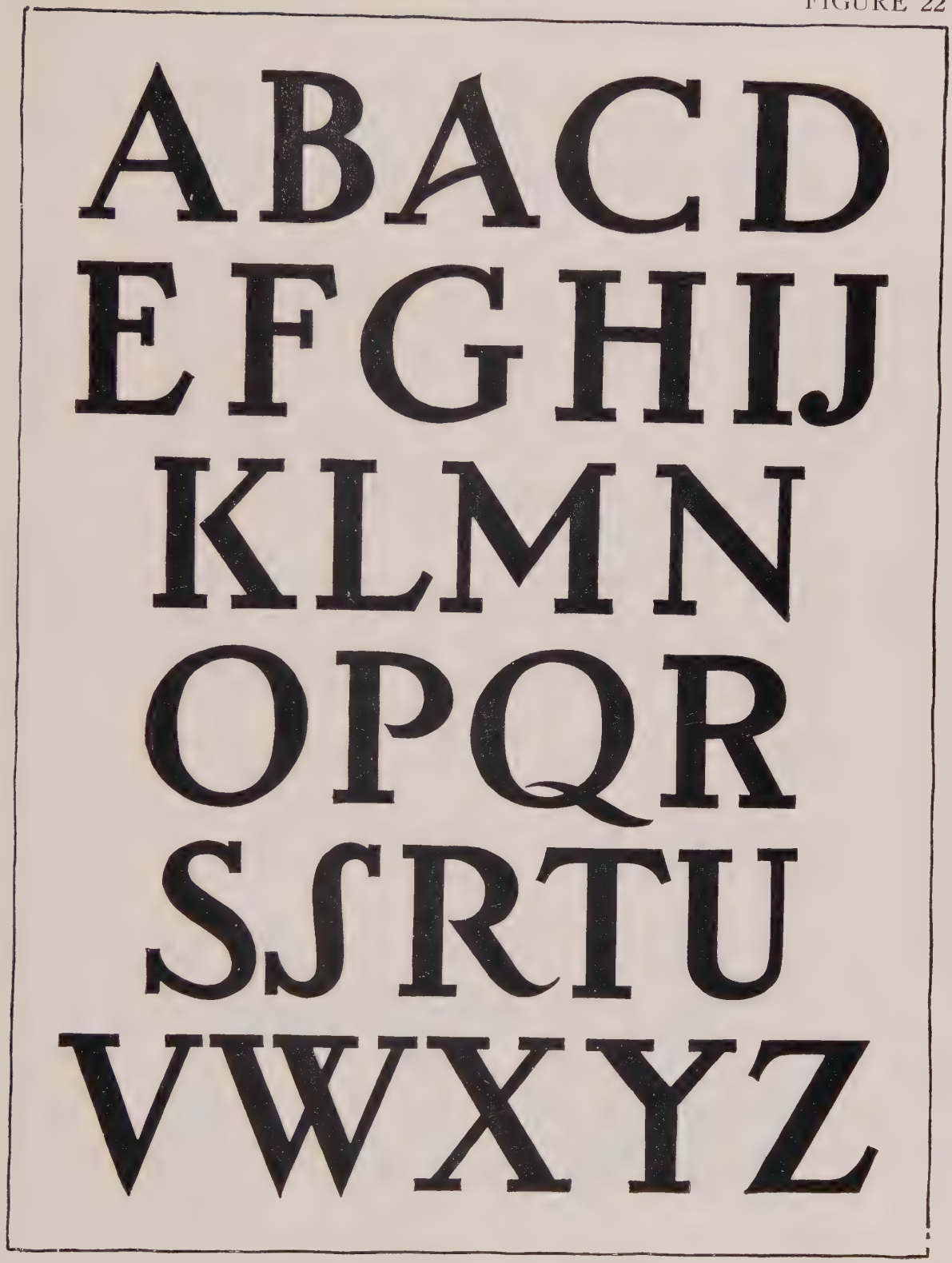
FIGURE 21



Modern Outline Roman Capitals

GUIDO ROSA

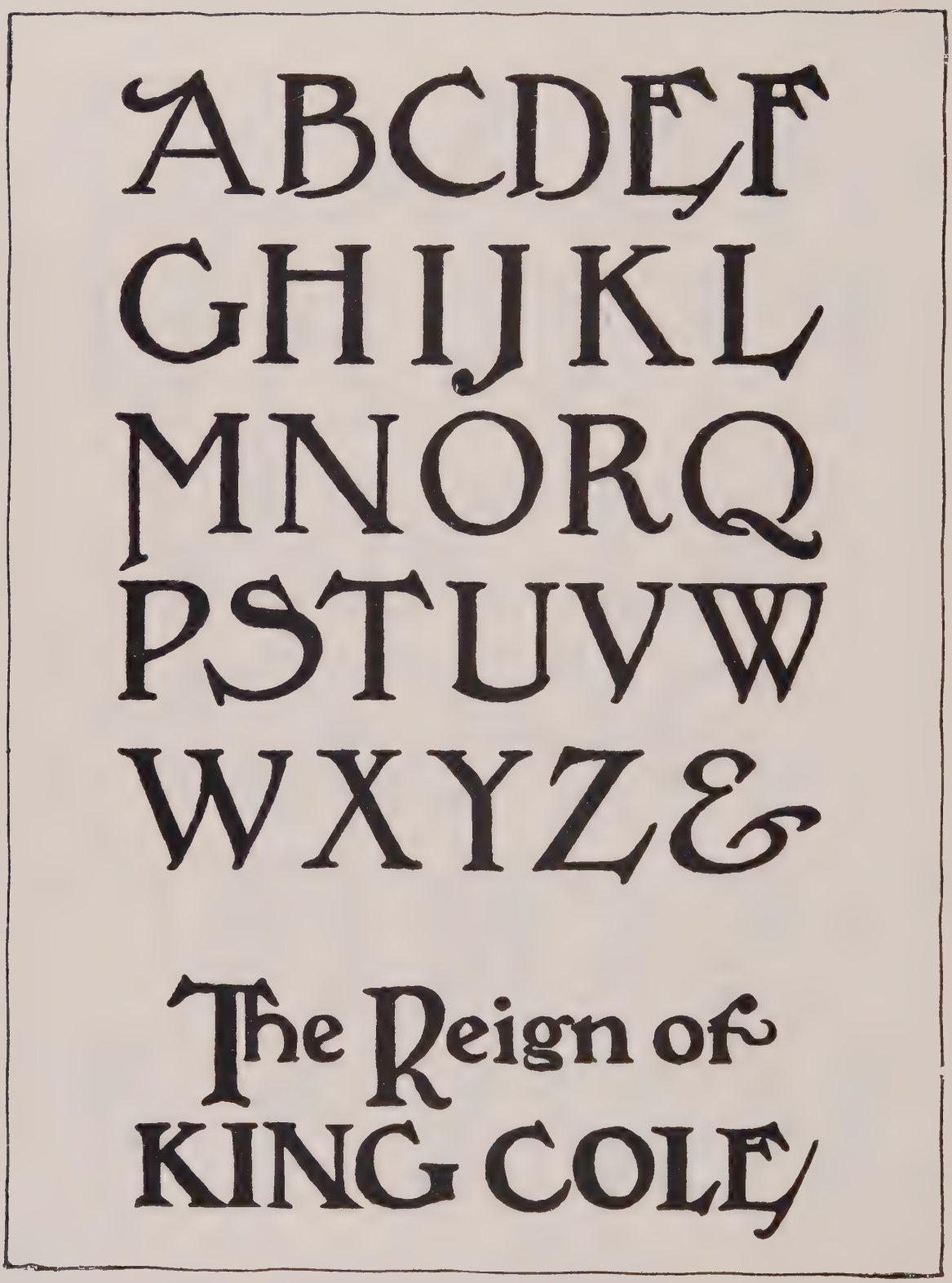
FIGURE 22



HARRY LAWRENCE CAGE

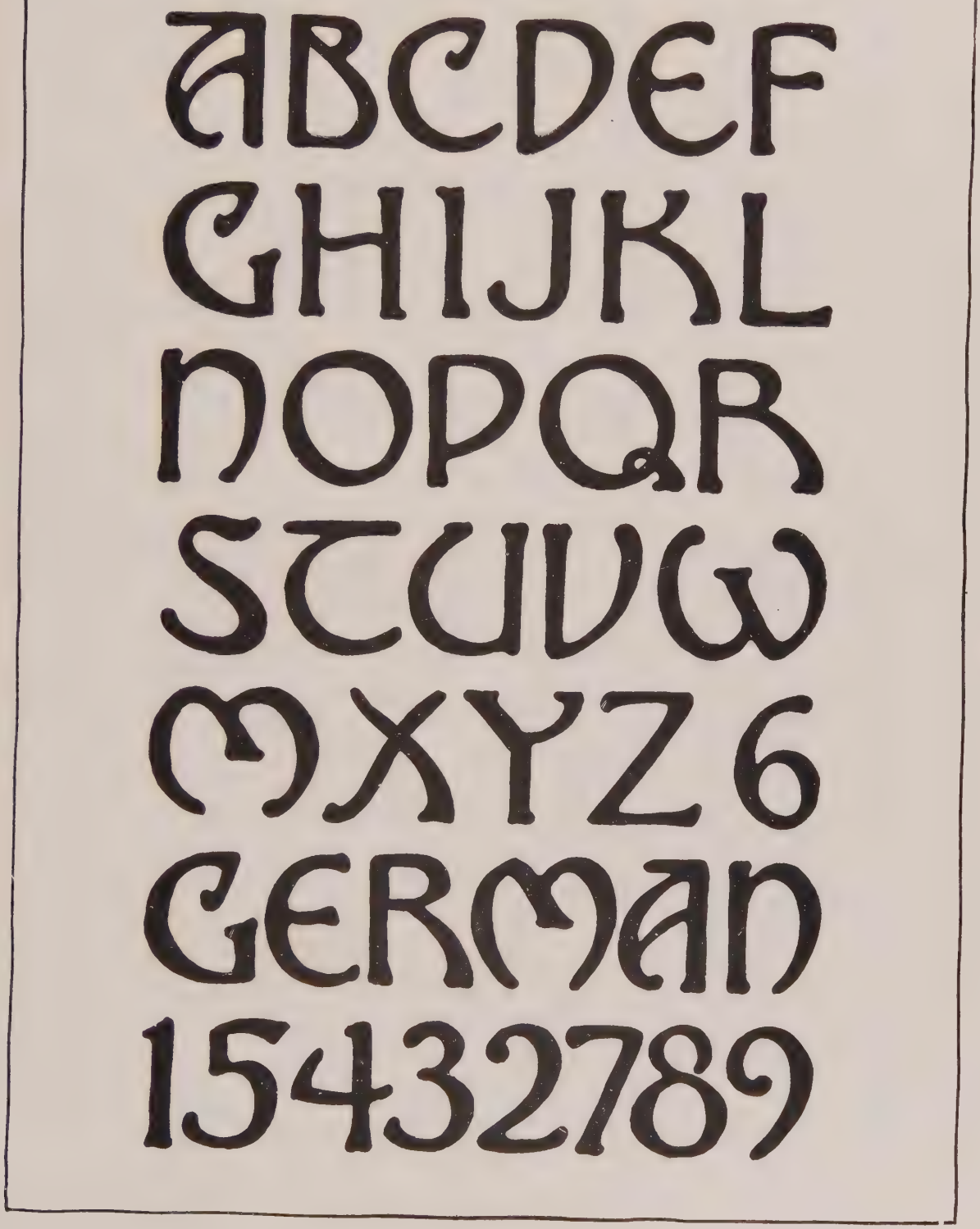
Heavy square-serif Roman Capitals

FIGURE 23



Capitals after Charles Robinson. For small letters see Figure 59

FIGURE 24



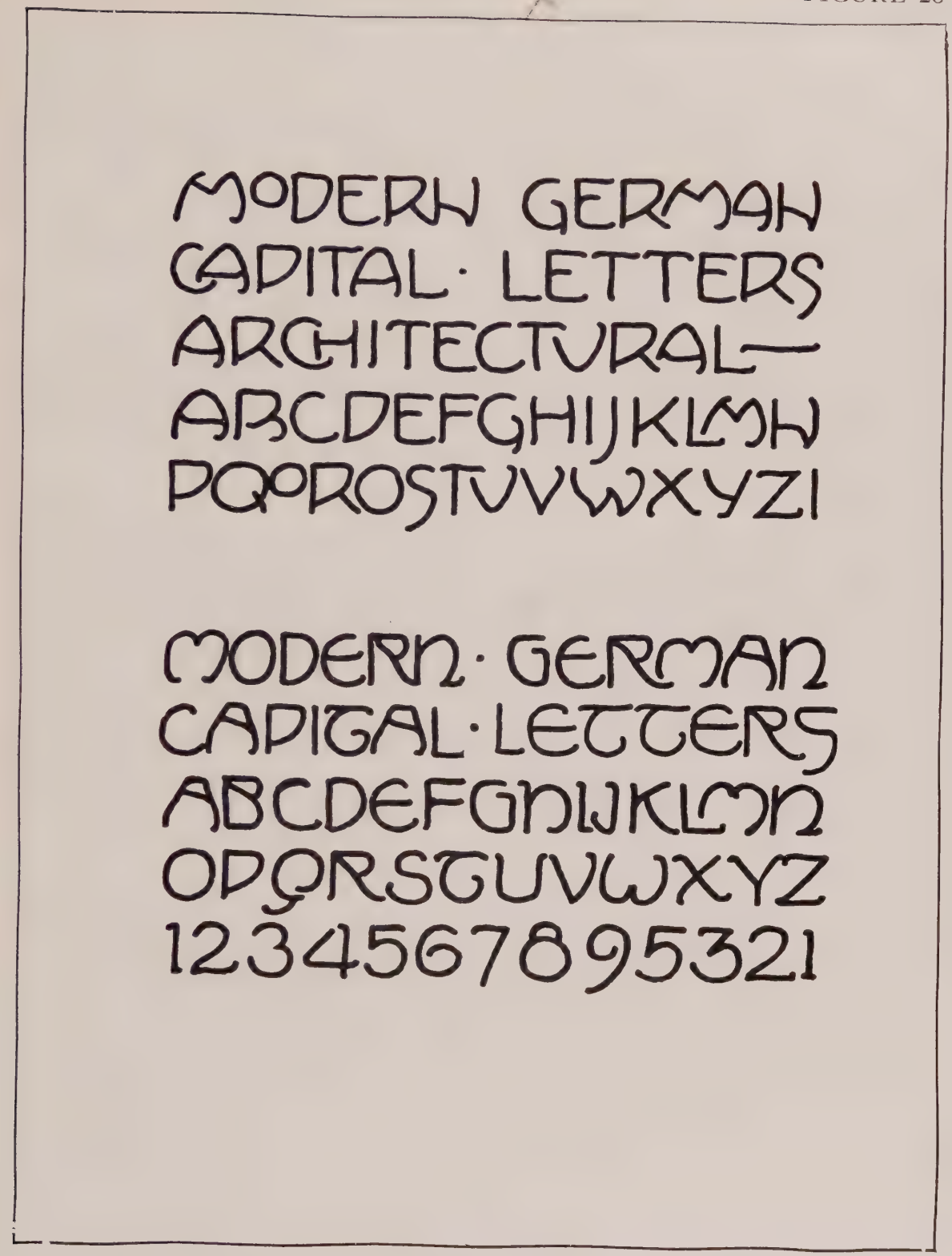
NED HADLEY

Capitals and Numerals adapted from modern sources

FIGURE 25

NED HADLEY

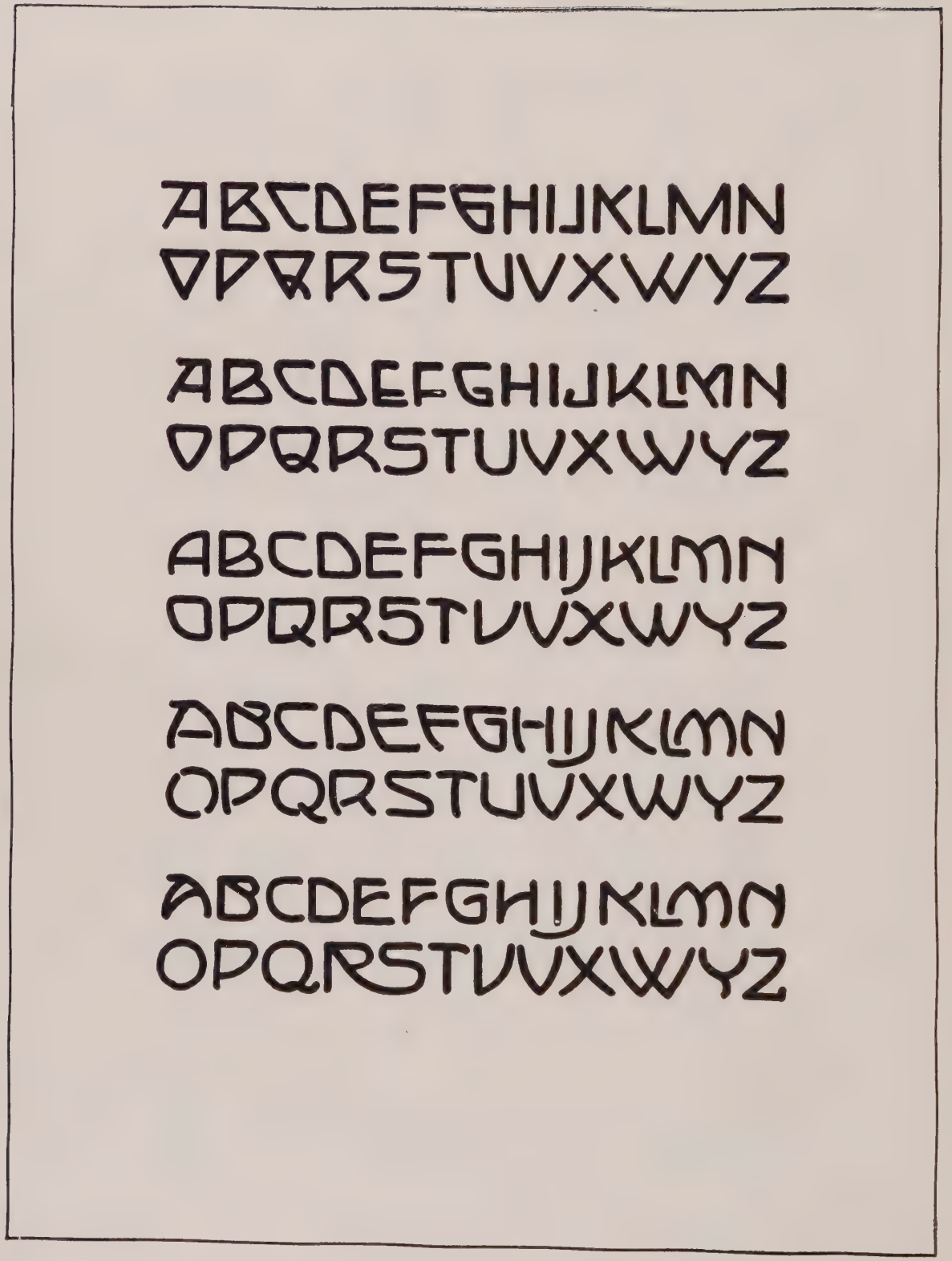
Modern Capitals and Numerals from French sources



HELEN E. HARTFORD

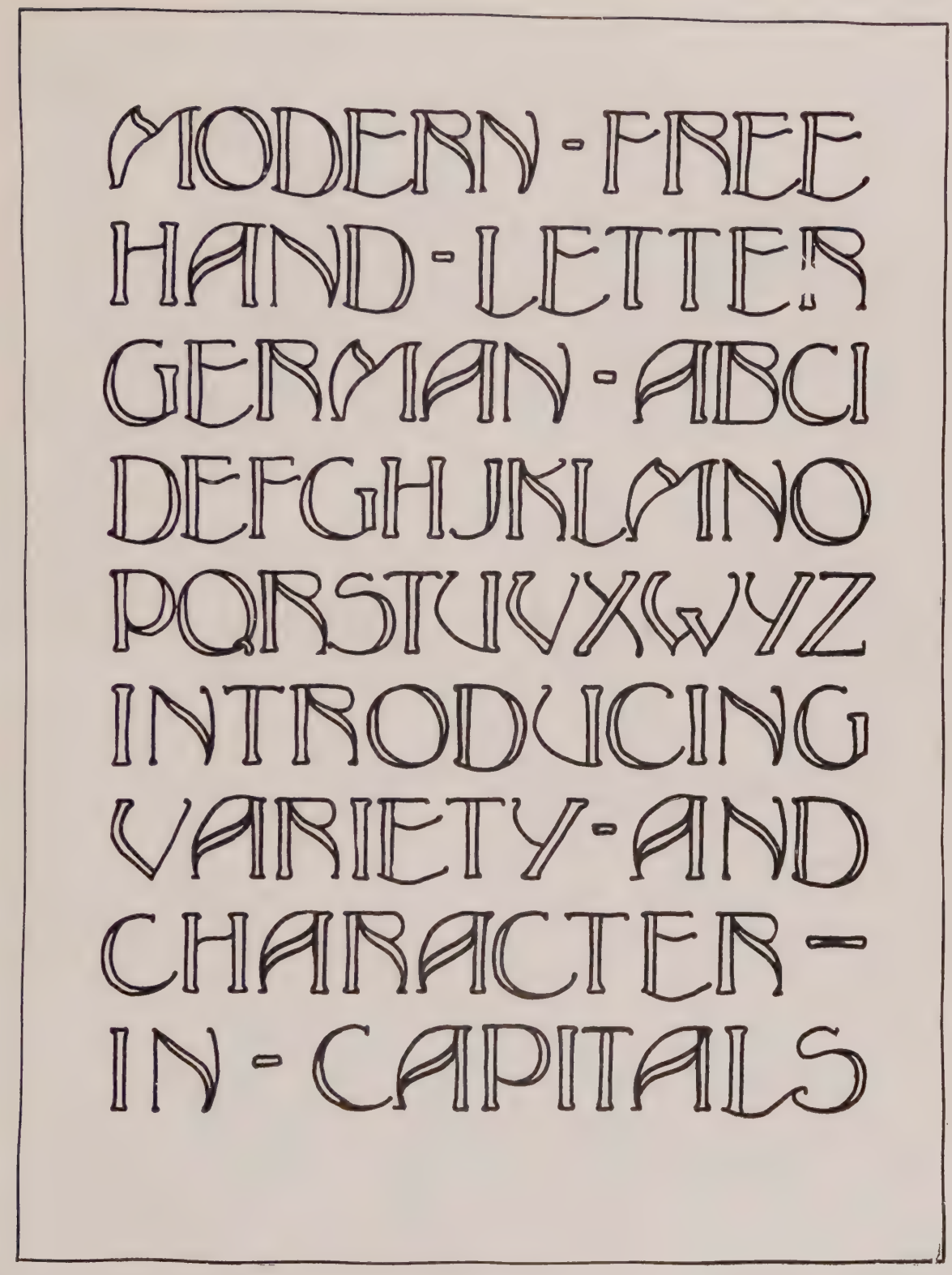
Modern Capitals written with the Spoonbill Pen

FIGURE 27



HELEN E. HARTFORD

Variations of modern alphabets written with the Spoonbill Pen



HELEN E. HARTFORD

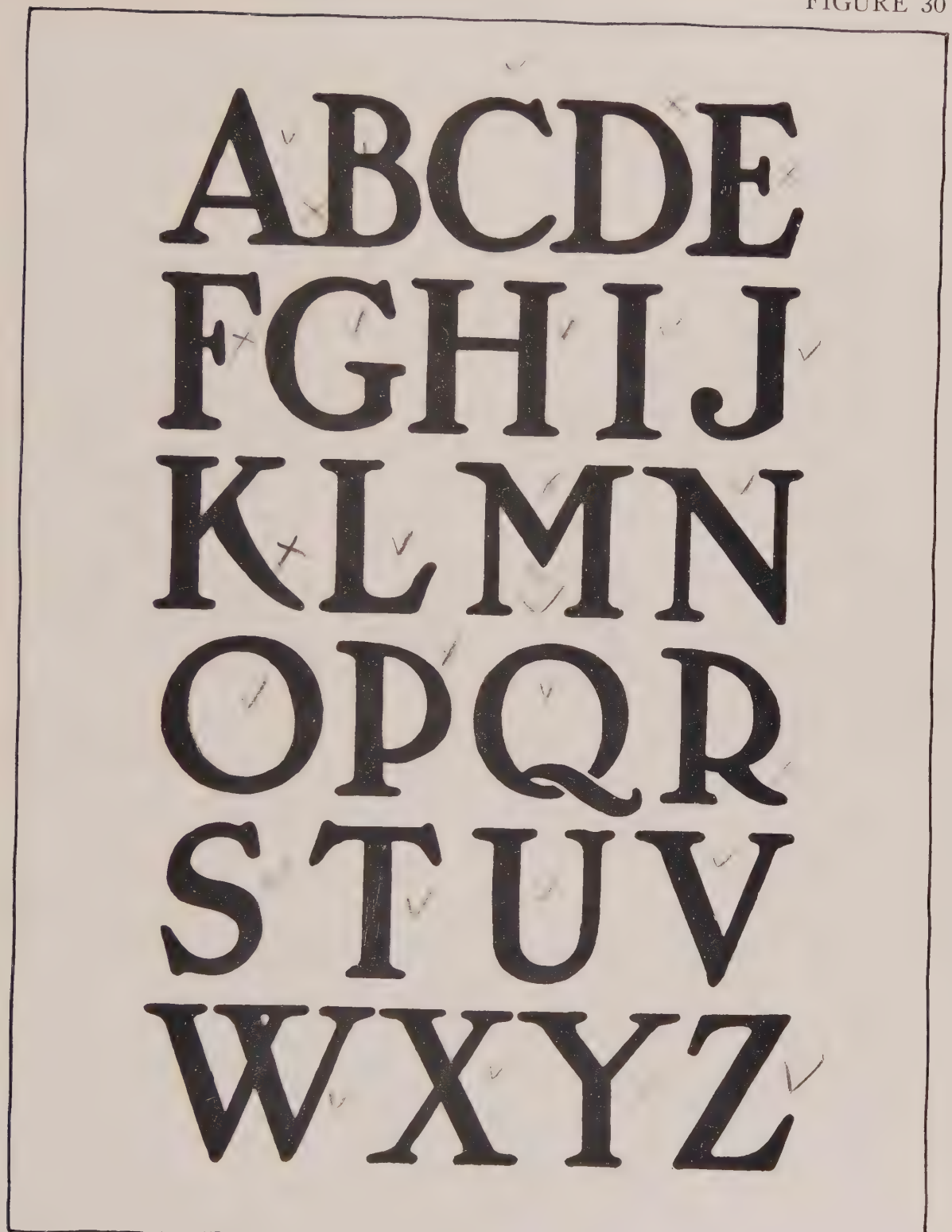
Accented modern Capitals written with the Spoonbill Pen

FIGURE 29

RUDOLPH VON LARISH

Outline Capitals in relation to architectural rendering

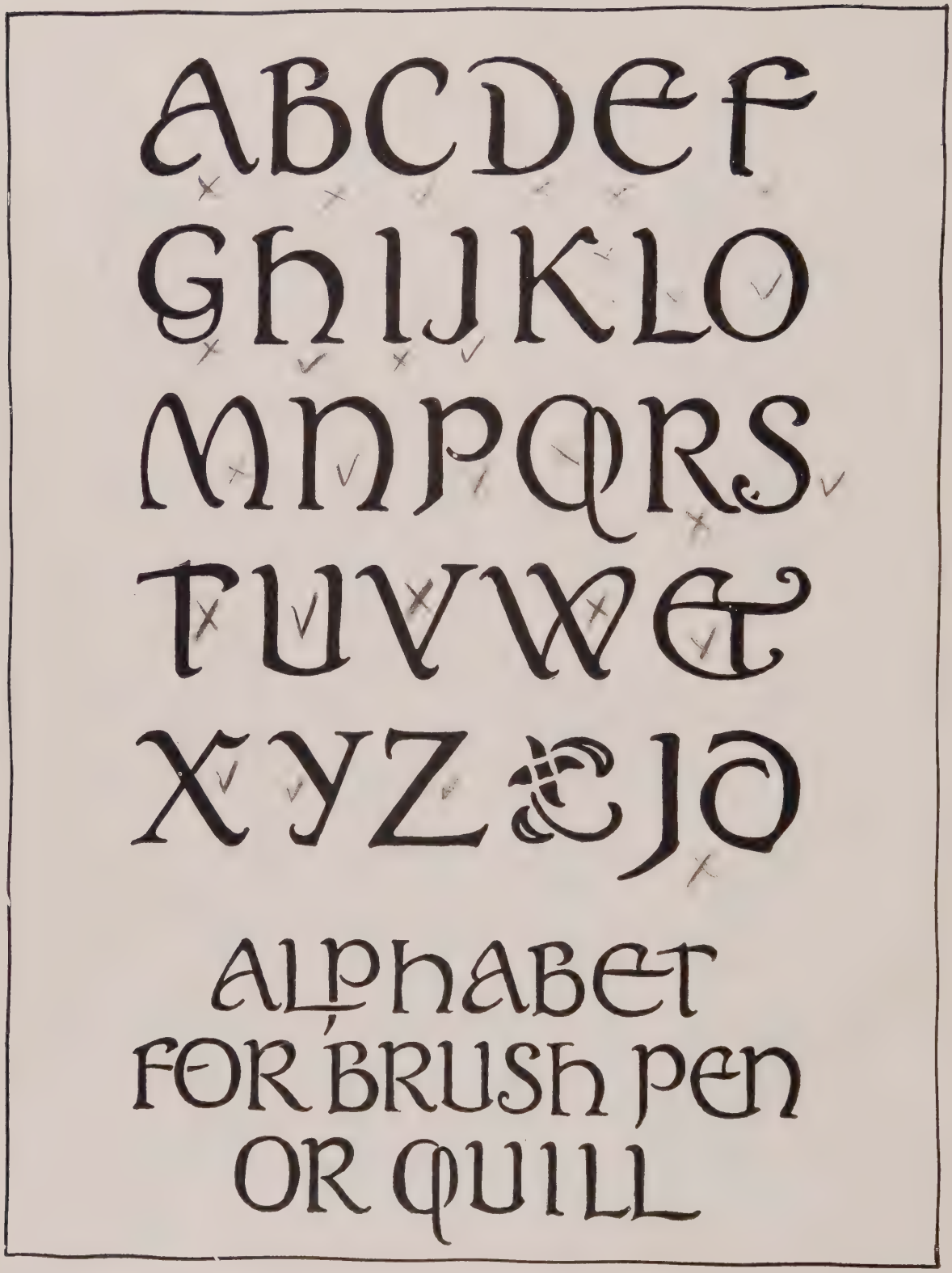
FIGURE 30



NORMAN P. HALL

Heavy modern Roman Capitals. For small letters see Figure 58

FIGURE 31



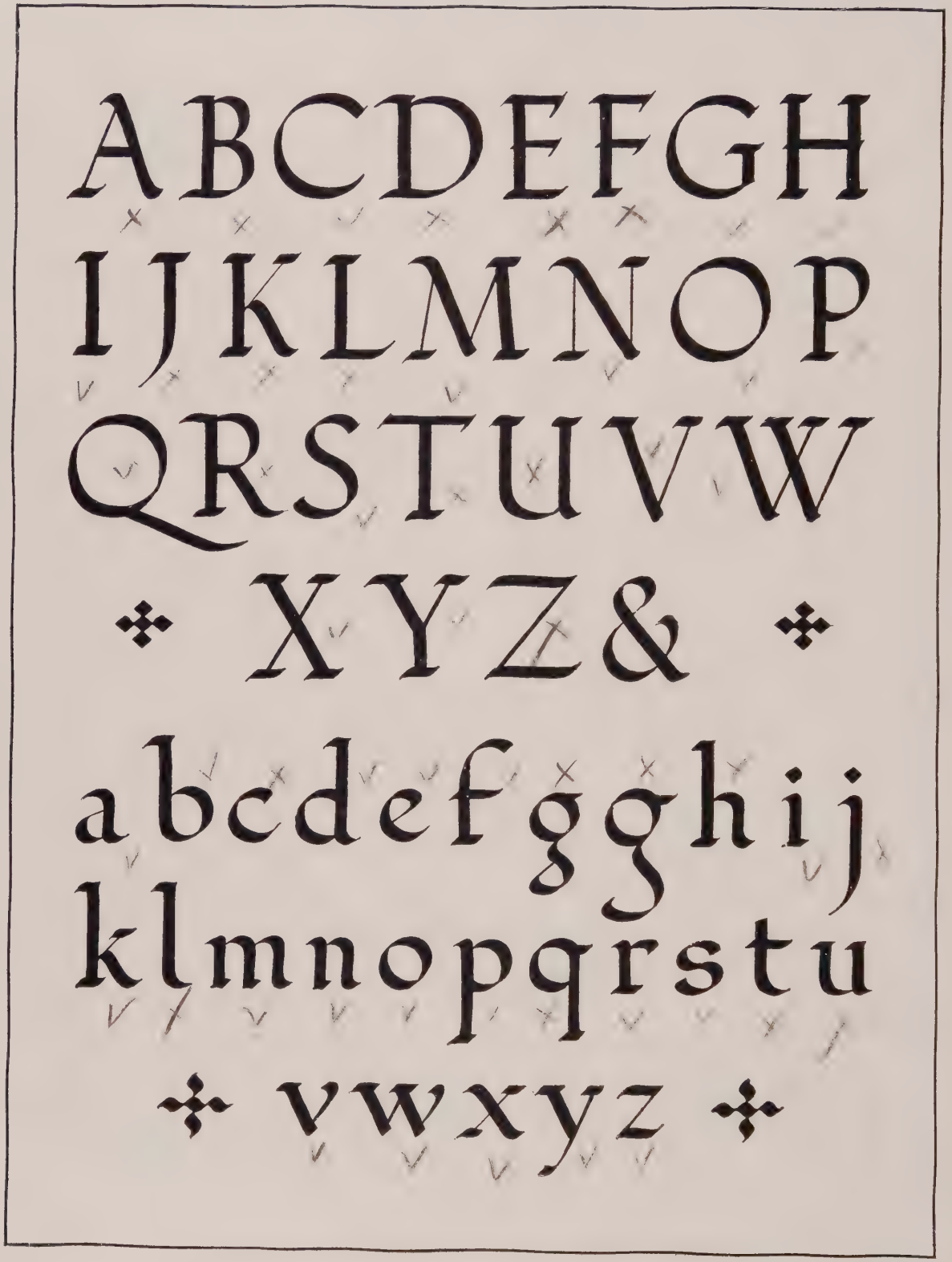
T. W. S.

Capitals derived from small letter forms

HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

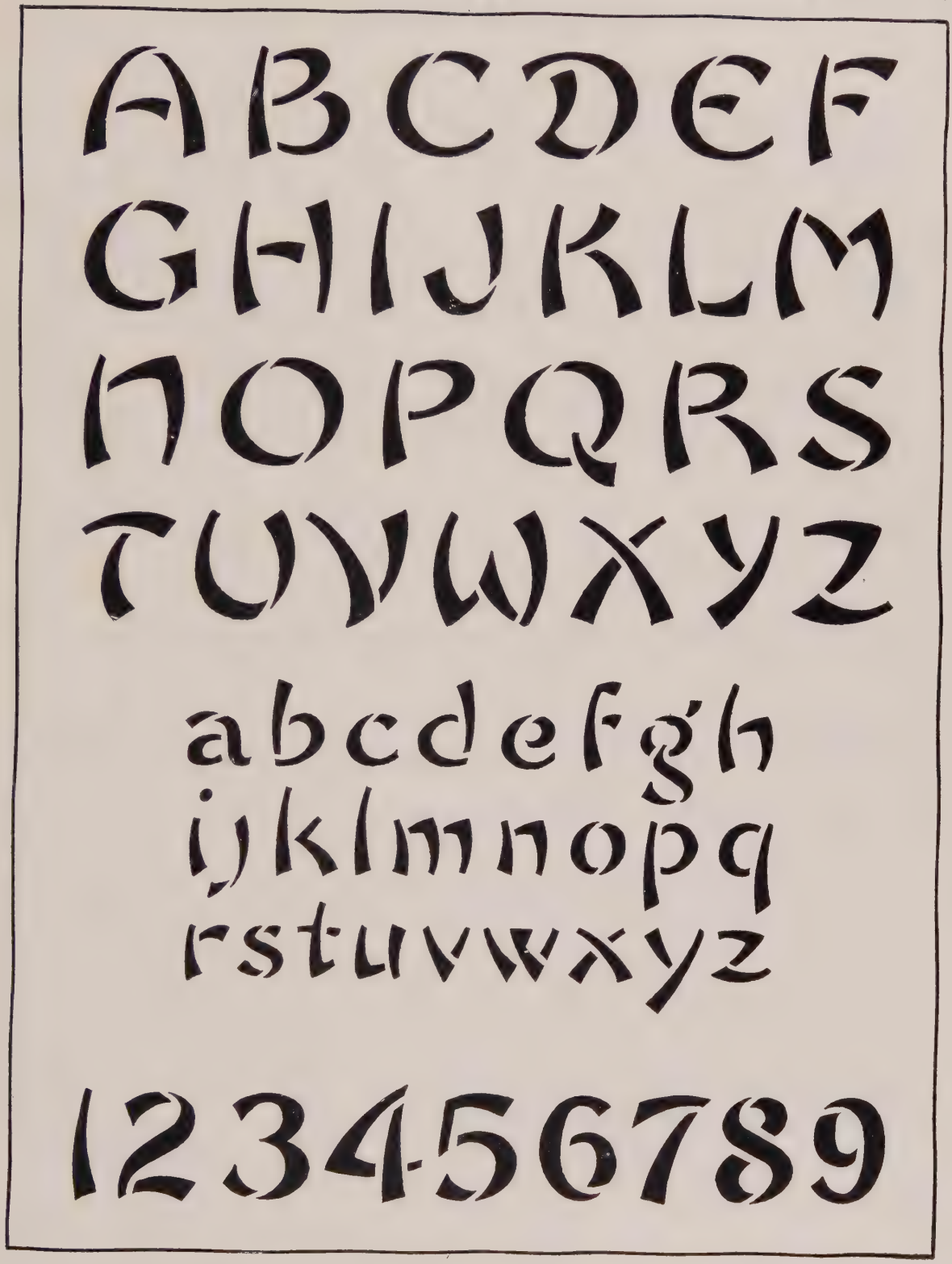
Capitals and small letters influenced by the Japanese

FIGURE 33



GEORGE W. KOCH

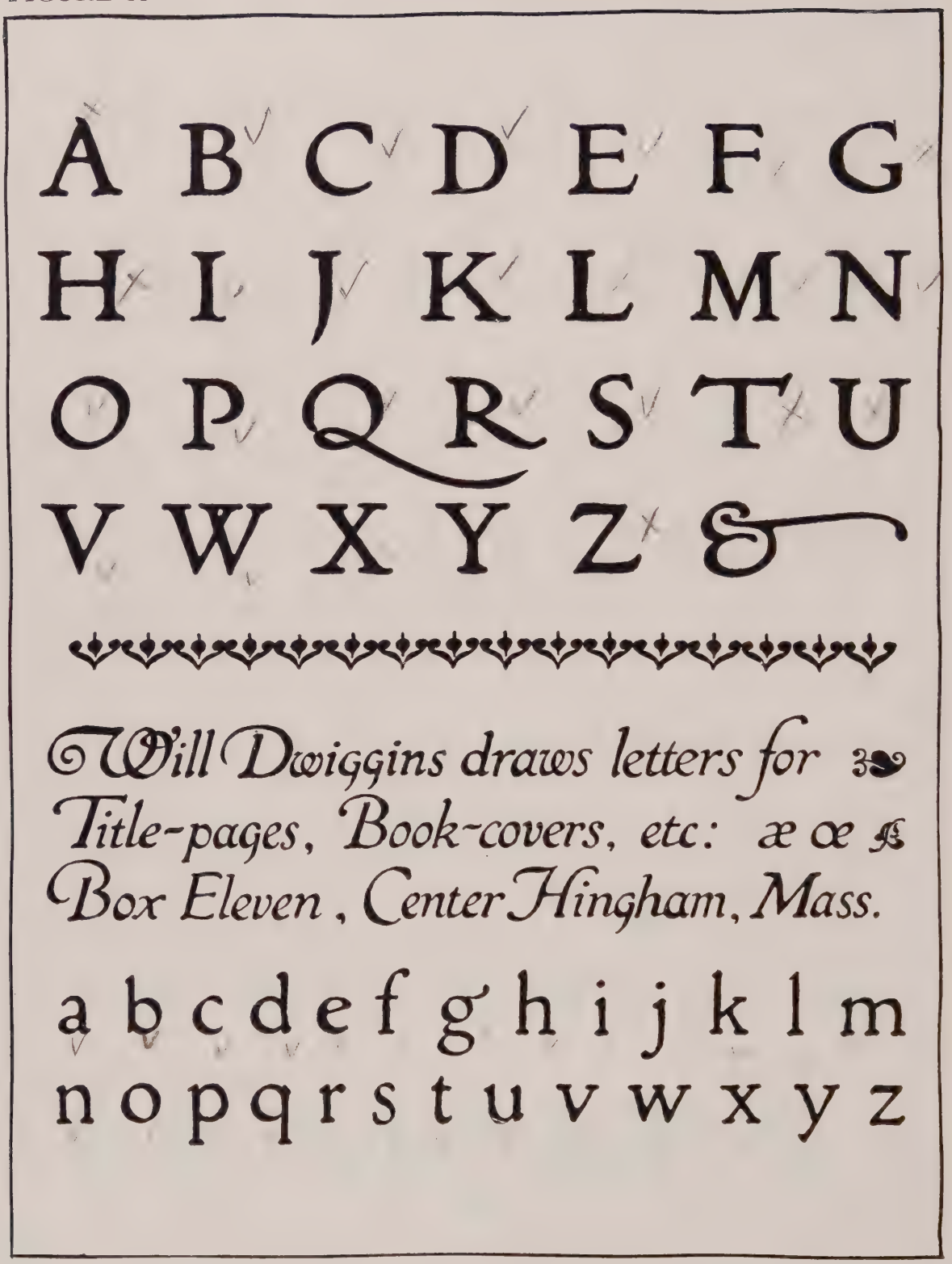
Roman Capitals and small letters written with a wide pen



FORREST C. CROOKS

Modern Capitals, small letters and numerals designed for use in cut stencils

FIGURE 35


A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z &
Will Dwiggins draws letters for
Title-pages, Book-covers, etc: æ œ
Box Eleven, Center Hingham, Mass.
a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

WILLIAM A. DWIGGINS

Roman Capitals and small letters. A personal variation on Georgian models

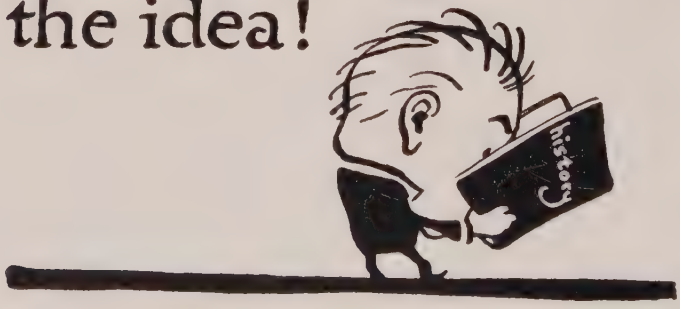
OSWALD COOPER

Modern Roman Capitals and small letters. A fine example of the tendency toward the written style

FIGURE 37

ABCDEFG
HIJKLMN
OPQRSTU
VWXYZ&

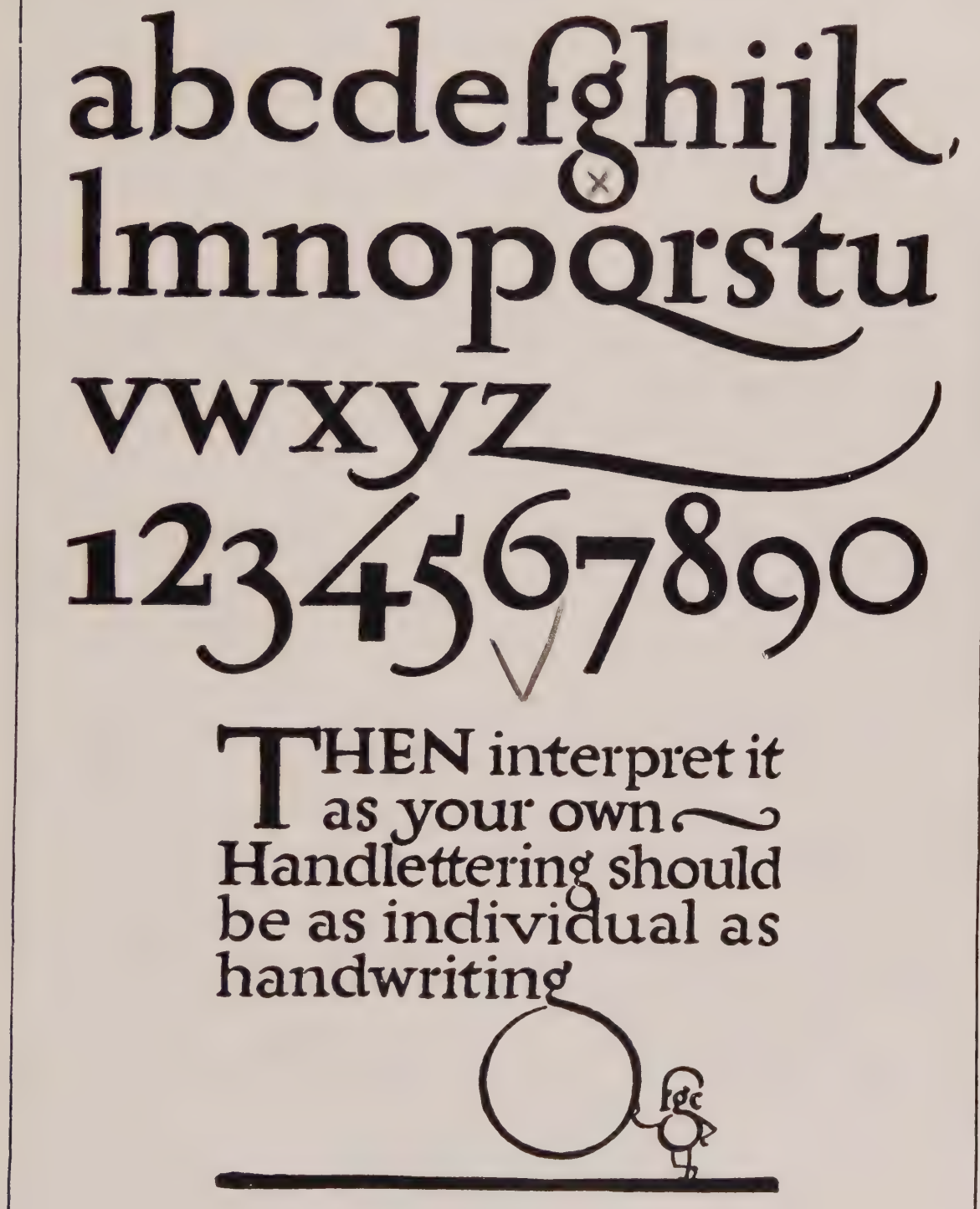
WHAT each letter really *is*, regardless of how anybody has interpreted it—that's the idea!



F. G. COOPER

Modern Roman Capitals

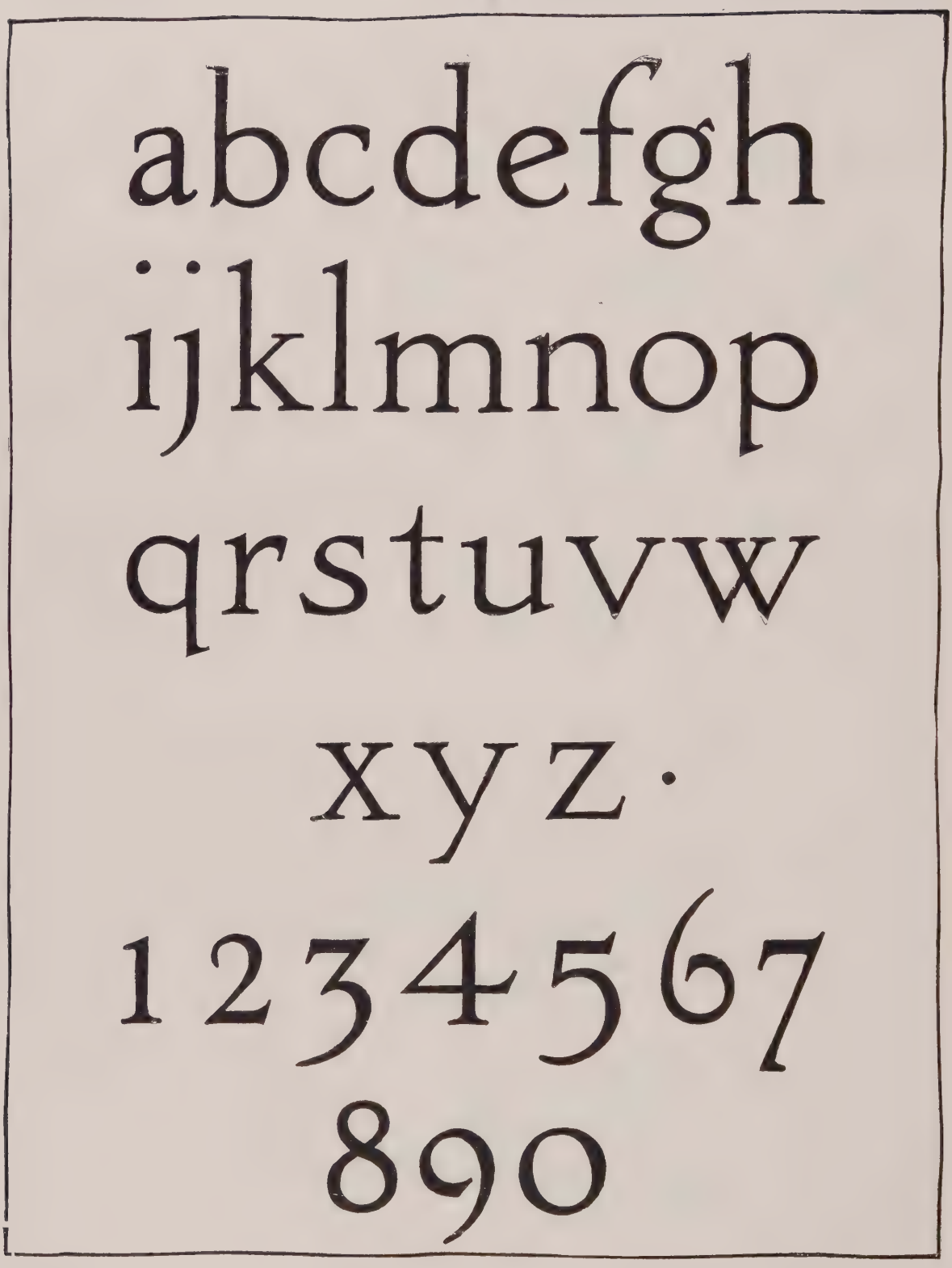
FIGURE 38



F. G. COOPER

Modern Roman small letters

FIGURE 39



CHAPTER IV

Roman Small Letters

AN inscription in Roman capitals has a dignified, monumental effect. It belongs with stately architecture. Its style has the quality of carving in stone, rather than of the reed-writing which had originally influenced it. When the inscription is extended to a full page, it becomes difficult to read, as well as difficult to execute. The letters must always be "built-up;" they cannot be written. So for work-a-day purposes the small letter, or minuscule, was evolved.

The classic Roman, written in a round and loose form, became the Uncial. Drifting still further from the architectural style, the "Rustic" appears as a manuscript letter in the fifth century; and along with this came an informal combination of Uncials, with certain strokes carried

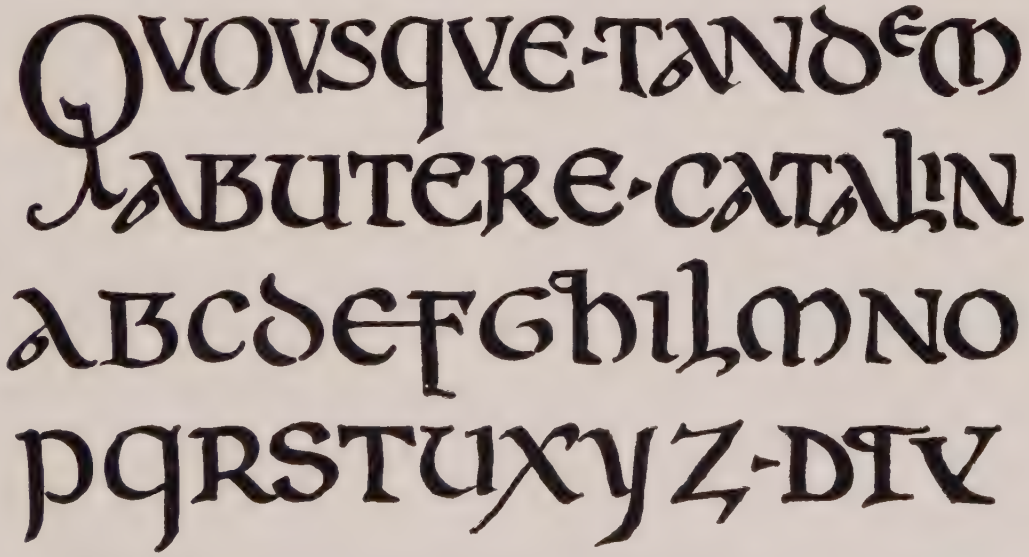


FIGURE 40. *Pen-drawn imitation of classic manuscript showing Uncial characteristics*

well above the line as "ascenders," to which the term Half Uncial is applied. All these variants resulted from the effort to make legible Roman letters that could be produced rapidly — in short, to arrive at a running hand. By the eighth century the capitals were recognized as such, and used, in many manuscripts, only as headings and initials, while the body of the work was done in minuscule — small letters.

The variants through these formative centuries are most interesting, and many of them, especially those of the Uncial order, are in high favor, as examples, among present-day designers.

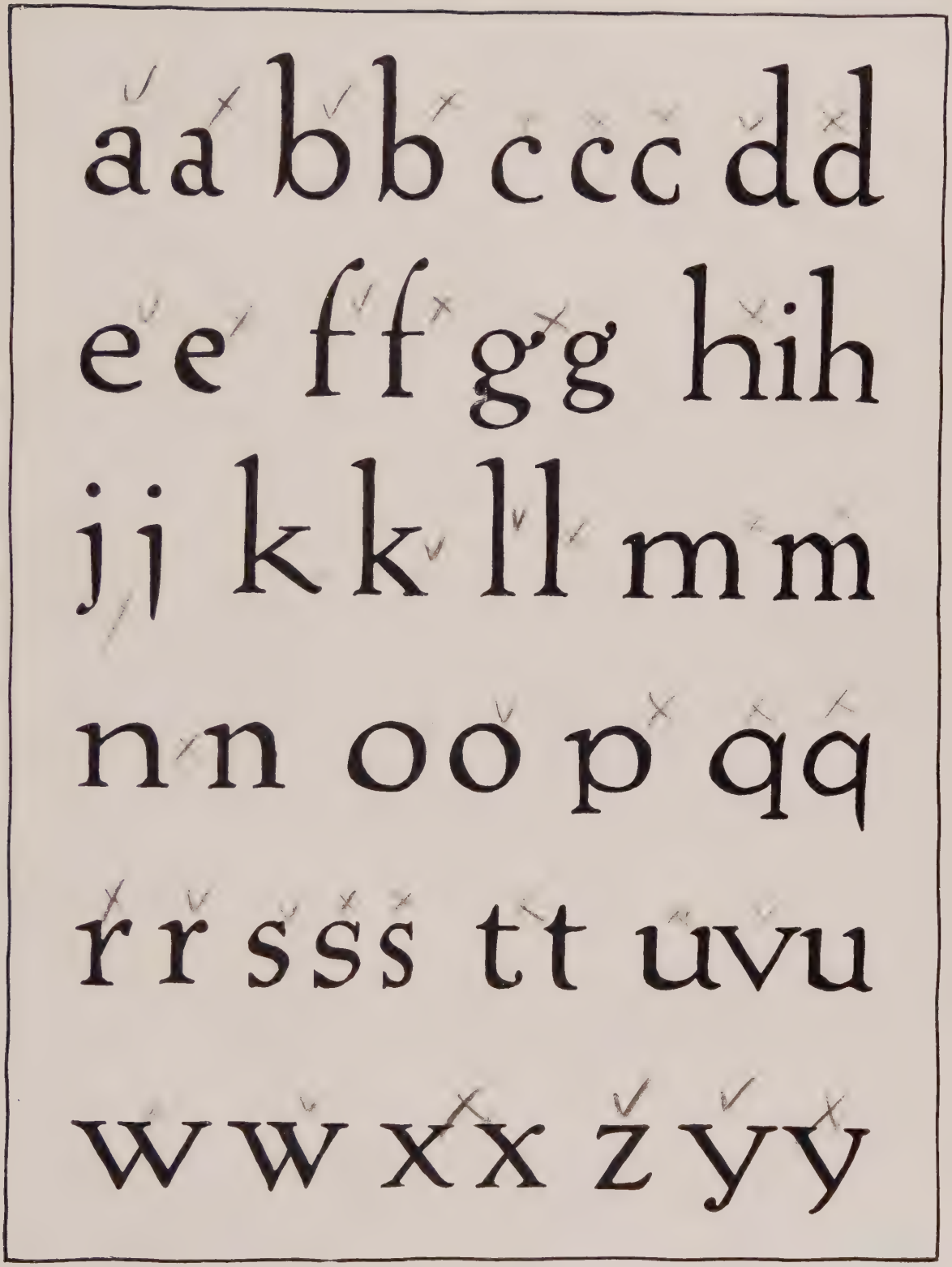
Toward the final form of the Roman small letters many countries contributed. The Northern variants are often black and spiky, and from them we get our Gothic and black-letter forms; the beautiful lettering of the Irish manuscripts comes of a fine and original treatment of the Half Uncial motive. On the Continent the Emperor Charlemagne took a hand in the matter, officially prescribing the use of the "Caroline" letter.

The invention of printing found a fairly established usage among the calligraphers, distinguishing between capitals of the old form and small letters. Until they were cast in type, however, the small letters had never found a positive or definitive form. The models of the early typefounders, who were merely trying to reproduce, in a new and less expensive process, the work of the calligraphers, were naturally obtained from the best penmen of the day. Within thirty years from the time the first book issued from the press, there were types in both Roman and black-letter, which, in proportion and design, have never been surpassed.

By their history we see that the small letters, or "lower case," as the printers named them, are the newer and commoner form. They still have about them the feeling of the pen and the graver, not that of the chisel. Their broken and irregular word-shape, the wide variation in design from letter to letter, and the inevitable accent of the capitals with which they must always be used, all mark out the field of their usefulness as the common reading medium.

From the nature of their work it appears that the minuscules do not usually require the exactness of execution, either in form or spacing, of the capitals. The individual letters may differ considerably from the typical form, and, so long as they do not fall out of harmony, the result will gain in richness by their variety.

Most students find it possible, with a moderate amount of practice, to draw lower case letters easily enough. The chief difficulty is not in the



CHARLES H. BARNARD

Modern small letters. For capitals see Figure 5

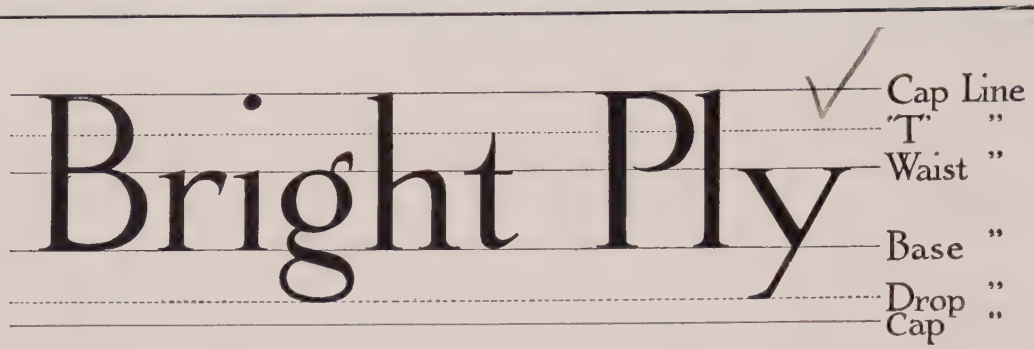


FIGURE 42. *Diagram showing the ruling of guide lines for the construction of small letters*

individual character, but in holding a block of words to an even "color" or general tone, without irregular "rivers" of white creeping down the page, and without unsightly variations in the sizes of the letters themselves.

In drawing, begin by carefully building up an exercise in letters about a half inch high, with capitals about one inch. Use Figure 39 as a guide, with capitals from Figure 2. The written forms are best undertaken after a careful study of the drawing of the individual characters. The use of vertical guide lines is not likely to be so necessary as when beginning with the capitals, but the horizontal rulings are even more important.

Each line of small letters must be built on at least three guide lines: the base line, on which the body letters rest; the waist line (about half the height of the capitals), marking the tops of the low letters; the capital line, giving the height of the capitals and ascenders. See Figure 42. The drop line, indicating the reach of the descenders, g, p, q, and y, and

FIGURE 43. *Diagram showing construction of part-round small letters. The curves would, if continued, pass the vertical strokes*

FIGURE 44

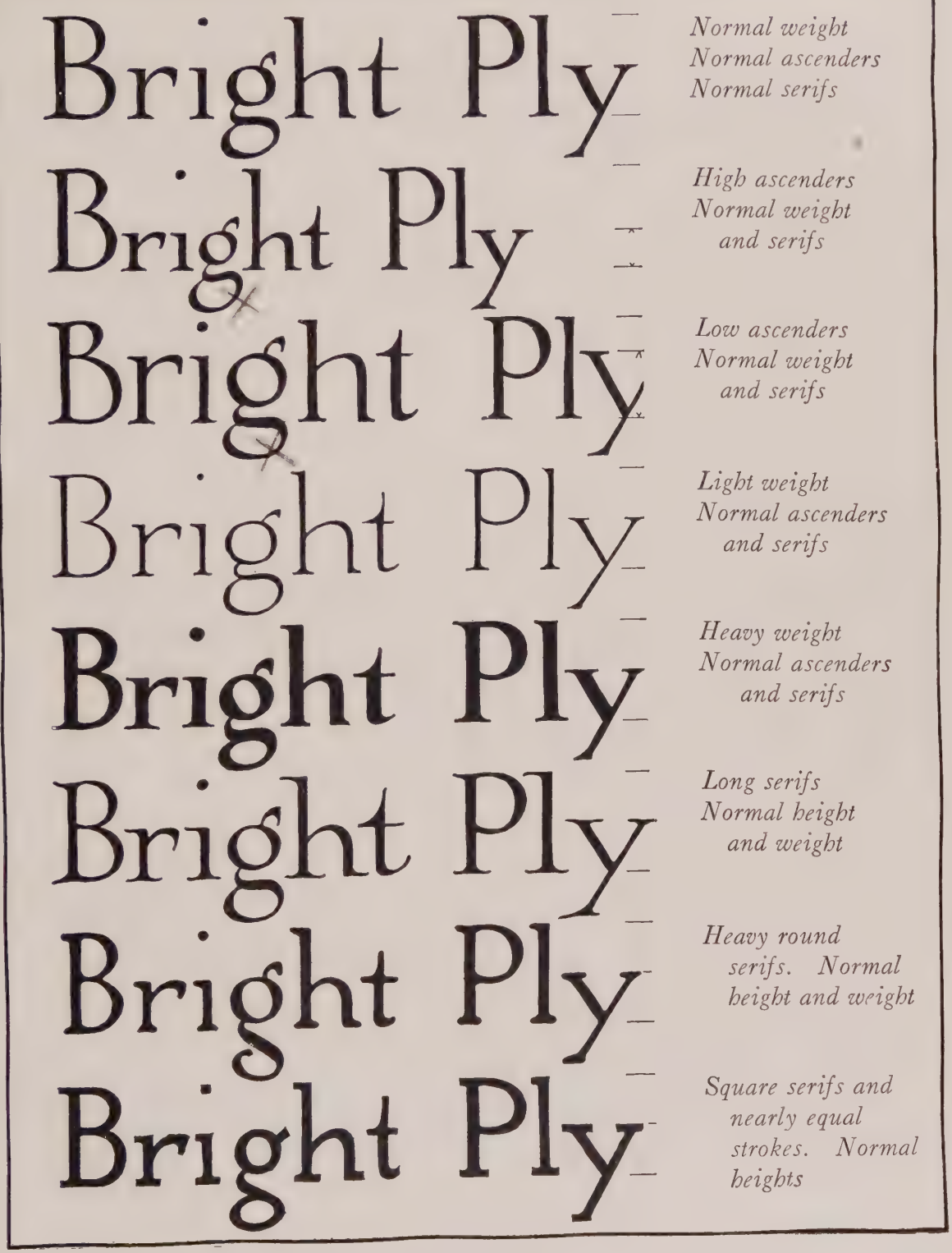


Diagram showing methods of varying the small letters

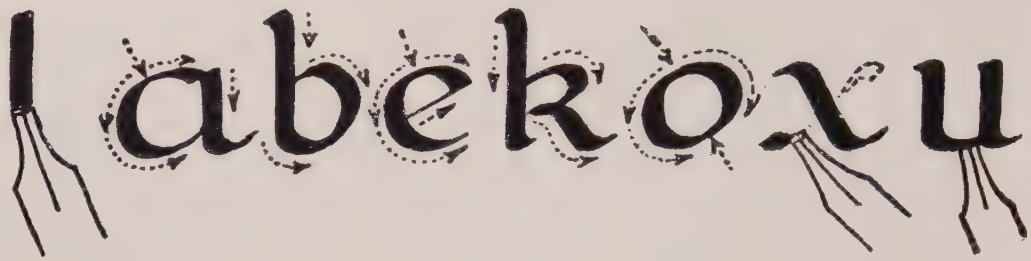


FIGURE 45. *Diagram showing the direction of strokes in writing small letters*

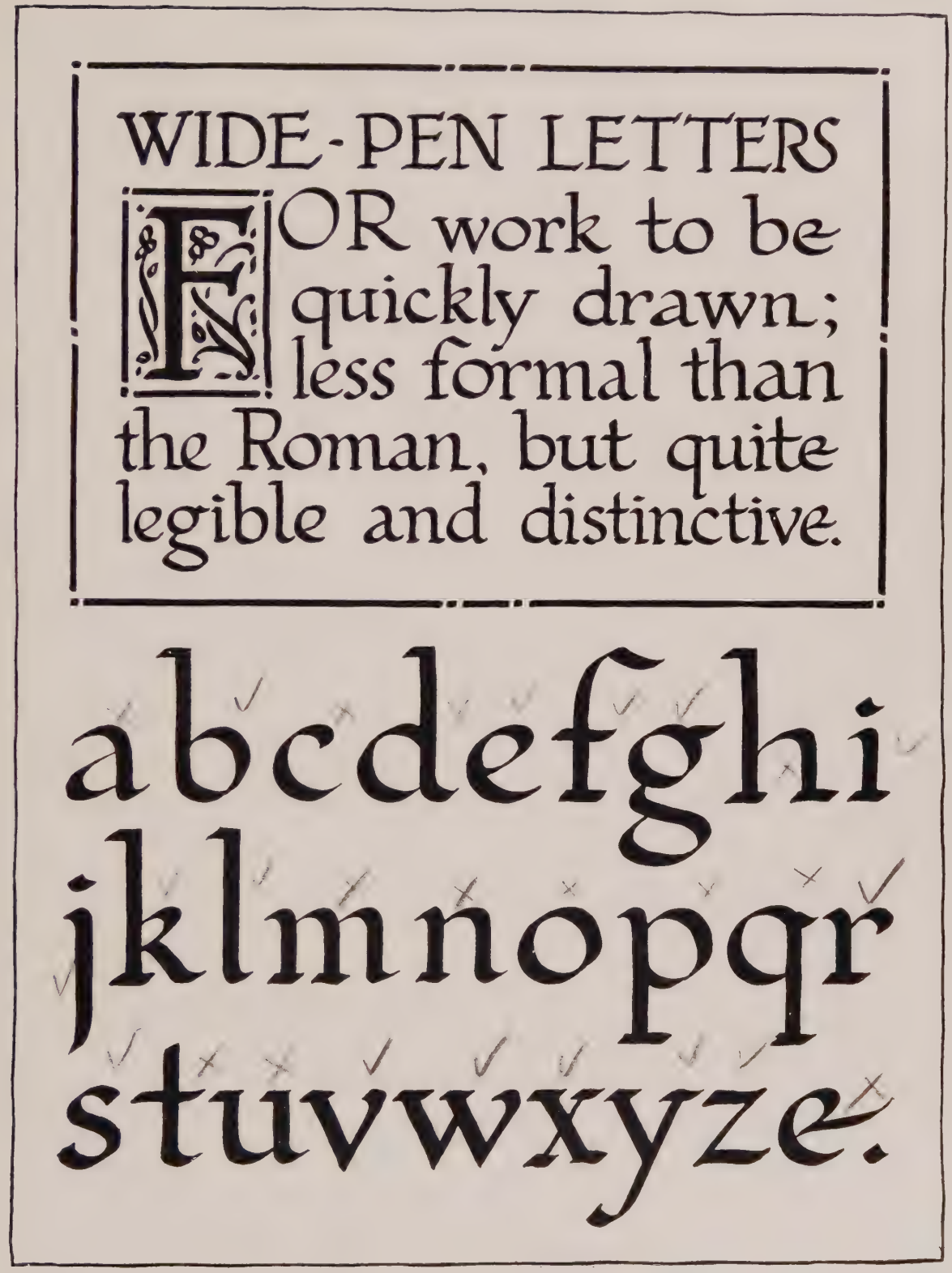
the T line, giving the height of the t, are frequently omitted in practice, the designer simply estimating the distances.

The simplest method of ruling is that by which the page is lined in equidistant horizontals; the first serves as a capital line, the second as a waist, the third as a base, and the fourth as the ensuing capital line.

The rule for the direction of accented strokes is the same for the lower case as for the capitals. Vertical strokes, and strokes downward from left to right, are heavy; horizontals, and slopes upward from left to right, (excepting the middle line of the z,) are light.

While the small letters show clearly enough their descent from written and engraved metal models, they have constantly to be used with capitals, which developed as stone-carved forms. A test of any piece of lower case work is found in its harmony with the capitals employed. The lower case letters which follow the capital shape the closest (c, o, s, v, w, x, and z) differ chiefly in proportion: the angles are somewhat wider, in order that the white contents may be more readily distinguishable, and the strokes are thicker. The small letters are about half the height of the capitals, yet they must stand in the same line, and be read with equal facility. If the strokes were equal in weight to corresponding elements of the capitals, the lower case line would blacken, and the capitals, with their wide white enclosures, would lose force; if the widths of stroke were reduced equally with the height, all relation would be lost. Hence the small letter is drawn lighter than the capitals, but not enough lighter to make perceptible any difference of tone.

In spacing small letters, one should bear in mind that the eye takes in common words by their shapes, their silhouettes, as it were, rather than by examining the individual letters which compose them. Hence it is desirable to pack the letters fairly close together. Theoretically, type


WIDE-PEN LETTERS
FOR work to be quickly drawn; less formal than the Roman, but quite legible and distinctive.
abcdefghi
jklmnopqr
stuvwxyze.

HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Small letters written with a wide pen. For capitals see Figure 12

designers hold that the space between the verticals of the lower case m is the unit of space between adjoining letters. But the single stroke letters (i, j, and l) always require more space at each side, and the round letters require less. Where a round or half-round letter stands next to a vertical, a compromise is necessary. The unit only comes into play, literally, when two full letters with vertical sides fall next to each other. A glance at a line of print will show how infrequently this happens. Still the unit may be useful to the letterer in that it provides a guide to reasonable and readable standards of spacing.

Under certain conditions, where it is desirable to produce as large a letter as possible to carry the copy in a given space, it will be found expedient to reduce the space between lines. This may be done, as in Figure 47, even to the point where the ascenders of one line pass the descenders of the line above. In such a case it is necessary now and then to decrease the height of an ascender, or to shift the spacing of a line, in order to avoid conflicts.

In laying out practice exercises it is advisable to undertake panels or pages of a definite measure, to be filled by certain copy, rather than verses, or similar copy in which it is only necessary to keep the left edge straight. The problem of adjusting the copy to the panel, choosing the right height of letter for the work, is part of the task of spacing, and practice in prompt estimating of sizes, and in shifting letters and words, or even whole lines, without undue loss of time and effort, is of great value to the beginner.

Different styles of lower case letters are obtained by varying the relative height and depth of the ascenders and descenders, the height of the letter body, the shape and weight of the serifs, the relative weight of the heavy and light strokes, the width of the letter body, the general weight of color, the shapes of the prevailing curves, and by certain minor effects in setting or constant spacing. A number of such variations are shown in Figure 44.

In all these directions numerous experiments have been made, so that it is readily possible to find any given idea of style repeated in many combinations, from the sanest to the most extreme.

A wide departure from the typical form in any one direction will usually produce an immediate sense of the uncommon. It may be a departure in a reasonable direction, as, for instance, the frequently "discovered" idea of very high ascenders and short descenders, which is based on the observation that we read type chiefly by the upper half of the body.

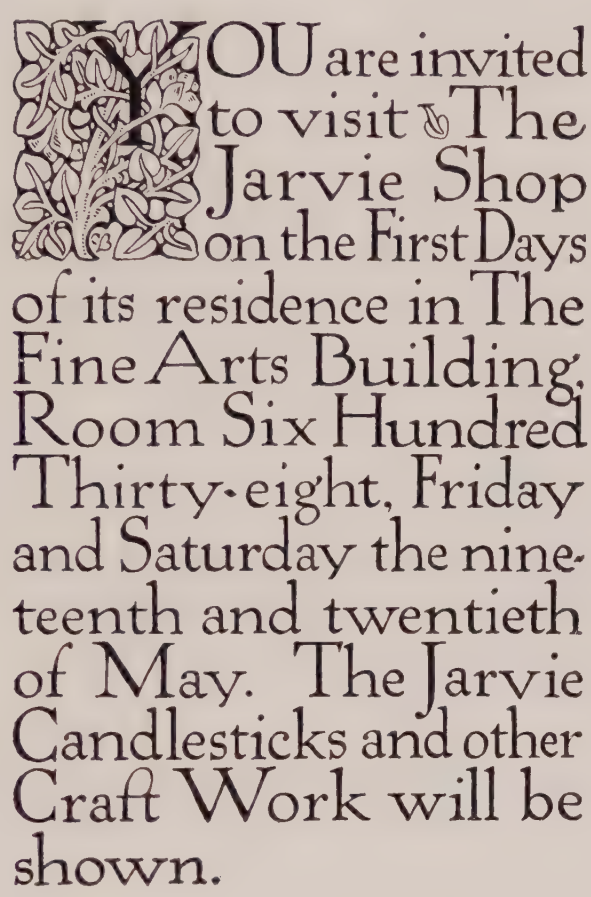


FIGURE 47. *Announcement in Roman small letters, showing close spacing between lines*

CHARLES H. BARNARD

Here a difficulty develops with the capitals. When the idea is carried to the extreme, these become so high as to overpower the small letters following.

Similarly a change of style by changing the proportions of the thick and thin strokes has its limitation. When the weights become too nearly equal, the color of the low letters becomes too heavy, and the design suffers

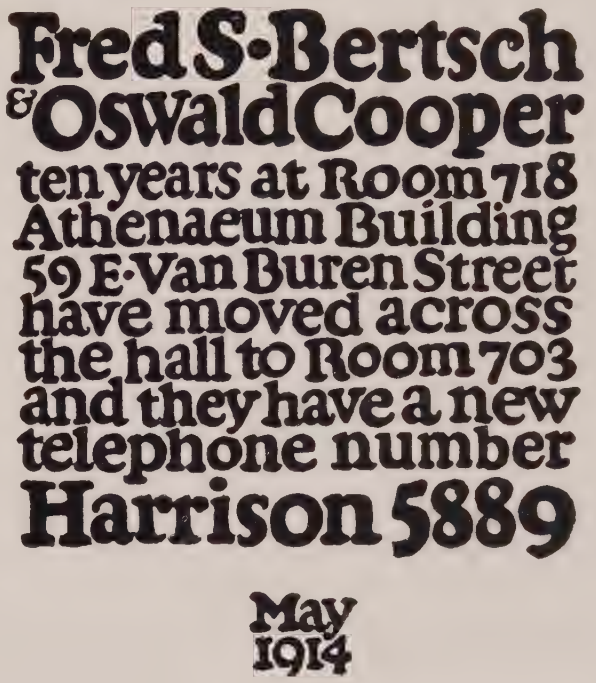


FIGURE 48. *Announcement in heavy Roman small letters*
OSWALD COOPER

an immediate loss of elegance; when the light strokes become too thin, the page wearies the eyes. In all the other vital characteristics the same need of holding to the golden mean will be found to prevail.

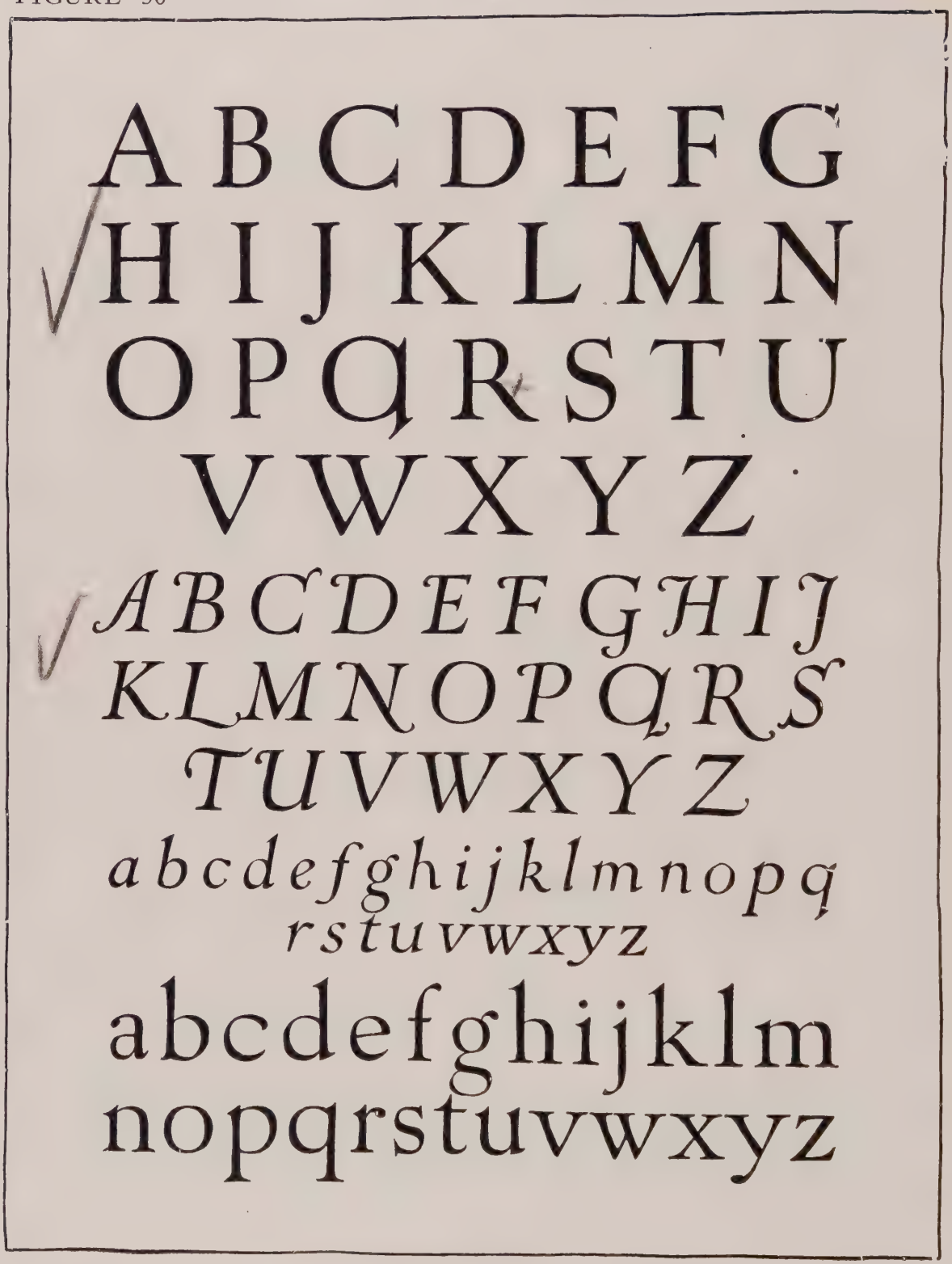
In spite of these conditions, the lower case is a rich field for individual and original effort. A designer of strong personality seldom uses one style for any considerable length of time without developing in it a new set of minor variations, making the letter at last as personal as his own handwriting — which, indeed, it is. This is the condition under which the most interesting styles are produced, — the unconscious influence of a personal taste on a reasonable form.

FIGURE 49

HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Heavy capitals, small letters, and numerals, adapted to block cutting

FIGURE 50


A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z
A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z
abcdefghijklm
nopqrstuvwxyz

EGBERT G. JACOBSON

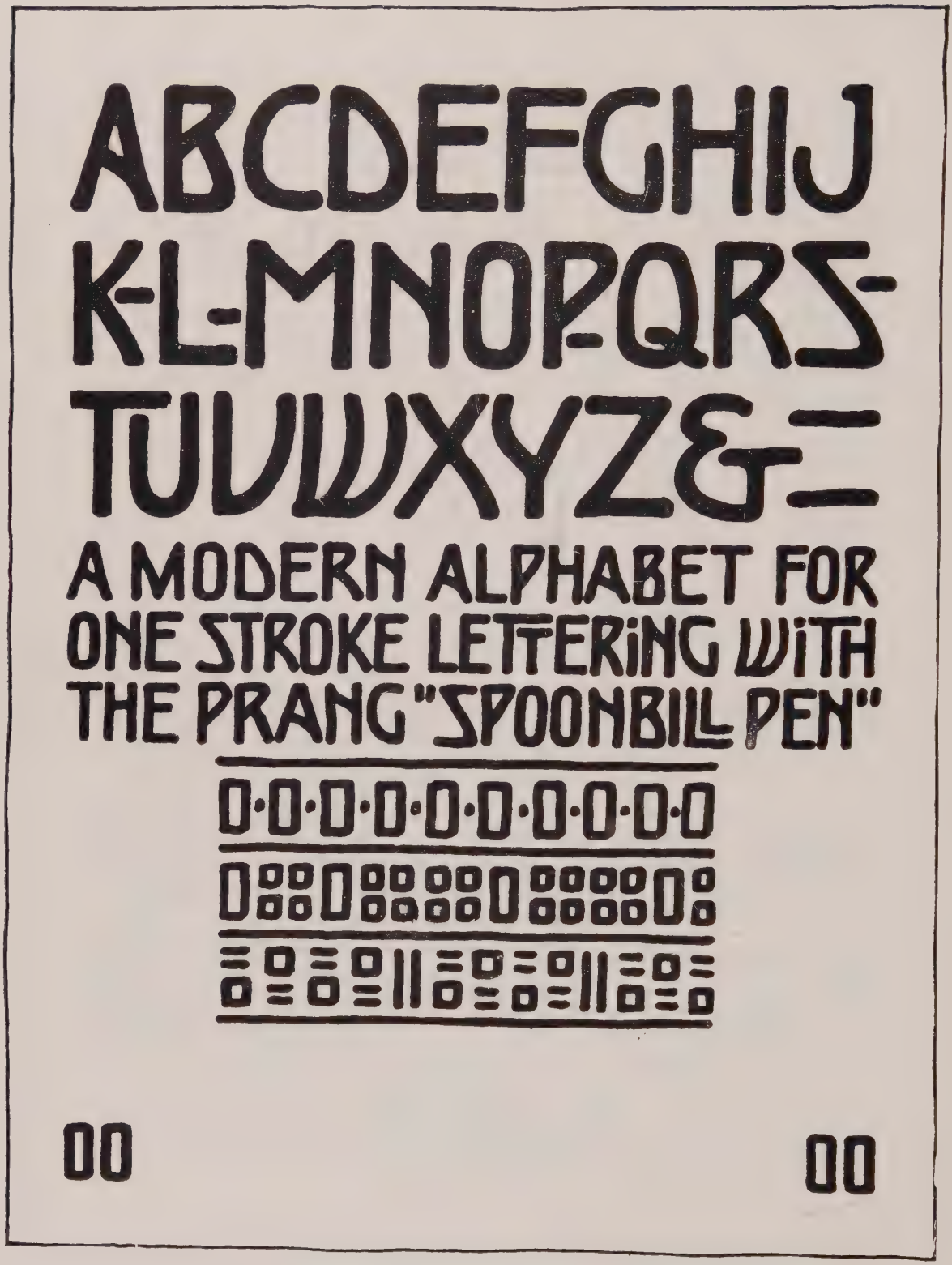
Modern Capitals, small letters, and italics

SAMUEL GOLDWYN INC., LTD.
RESEARCH LIBRARY

FIGURE 51

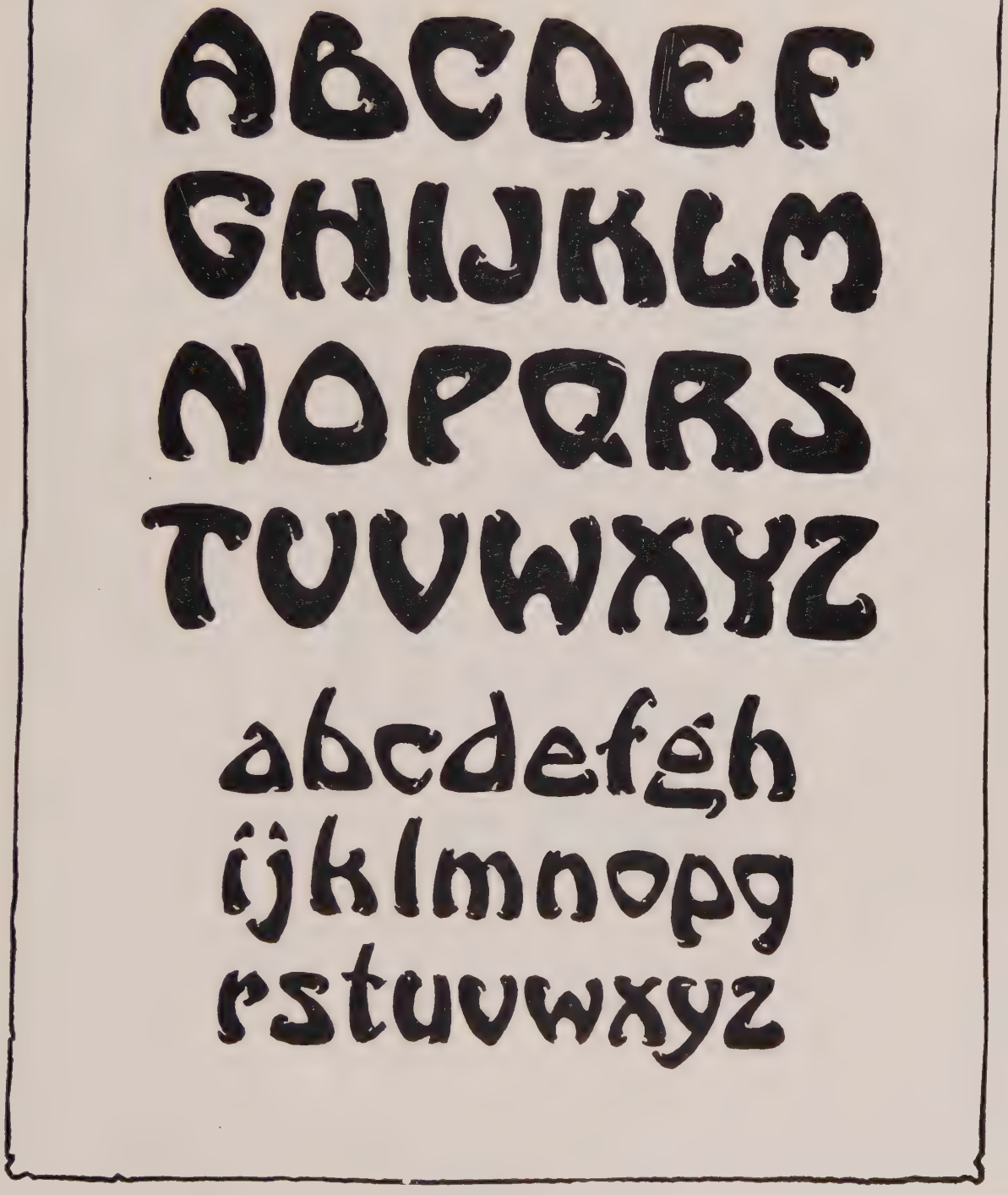
Freehand Lettering with the Spoonbill Pen CHARLES FARLEY

FIGURE 52



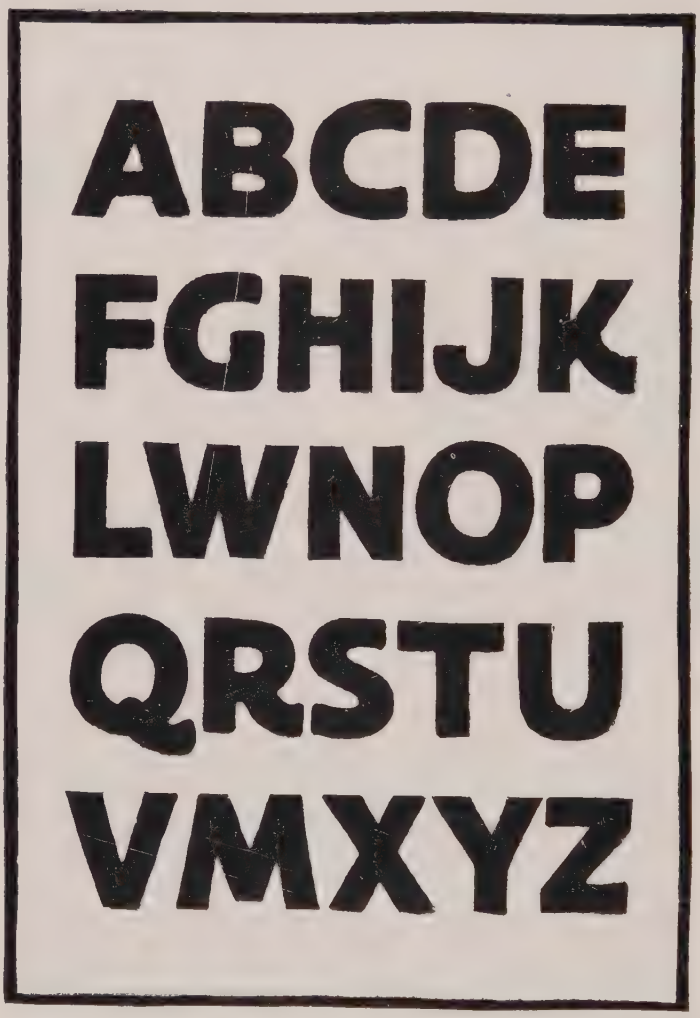
Freehand Lettering with the Spoonbill Pen CHARLES FARLEY

FIGURE 53



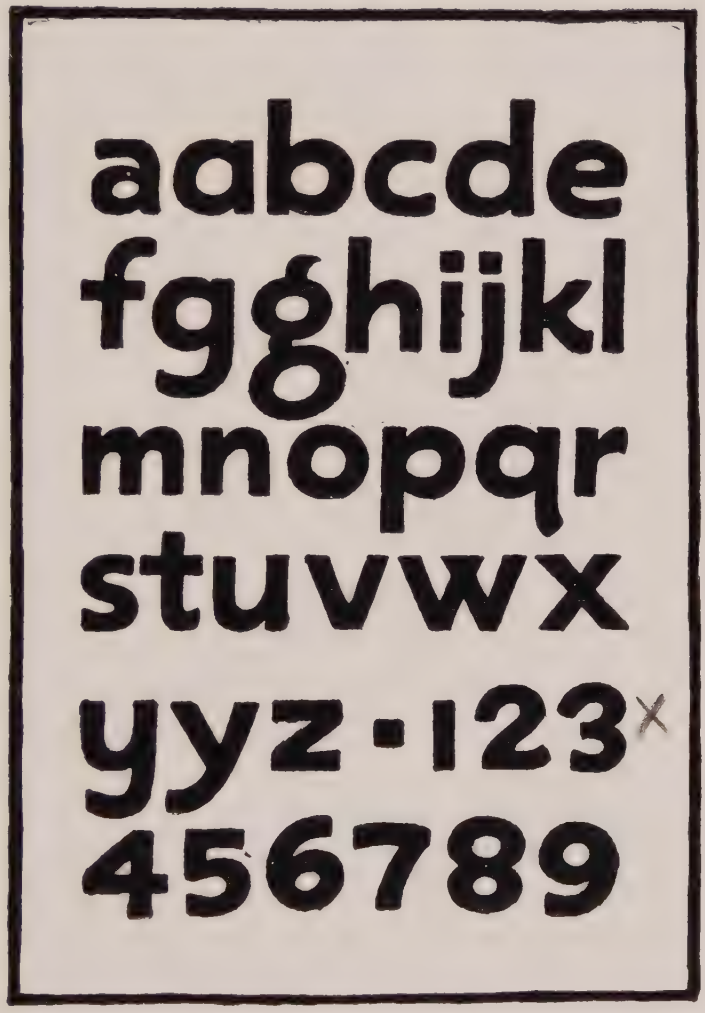
Modern-Brush Lettering BERNARDO SARTO

FIGURE 54



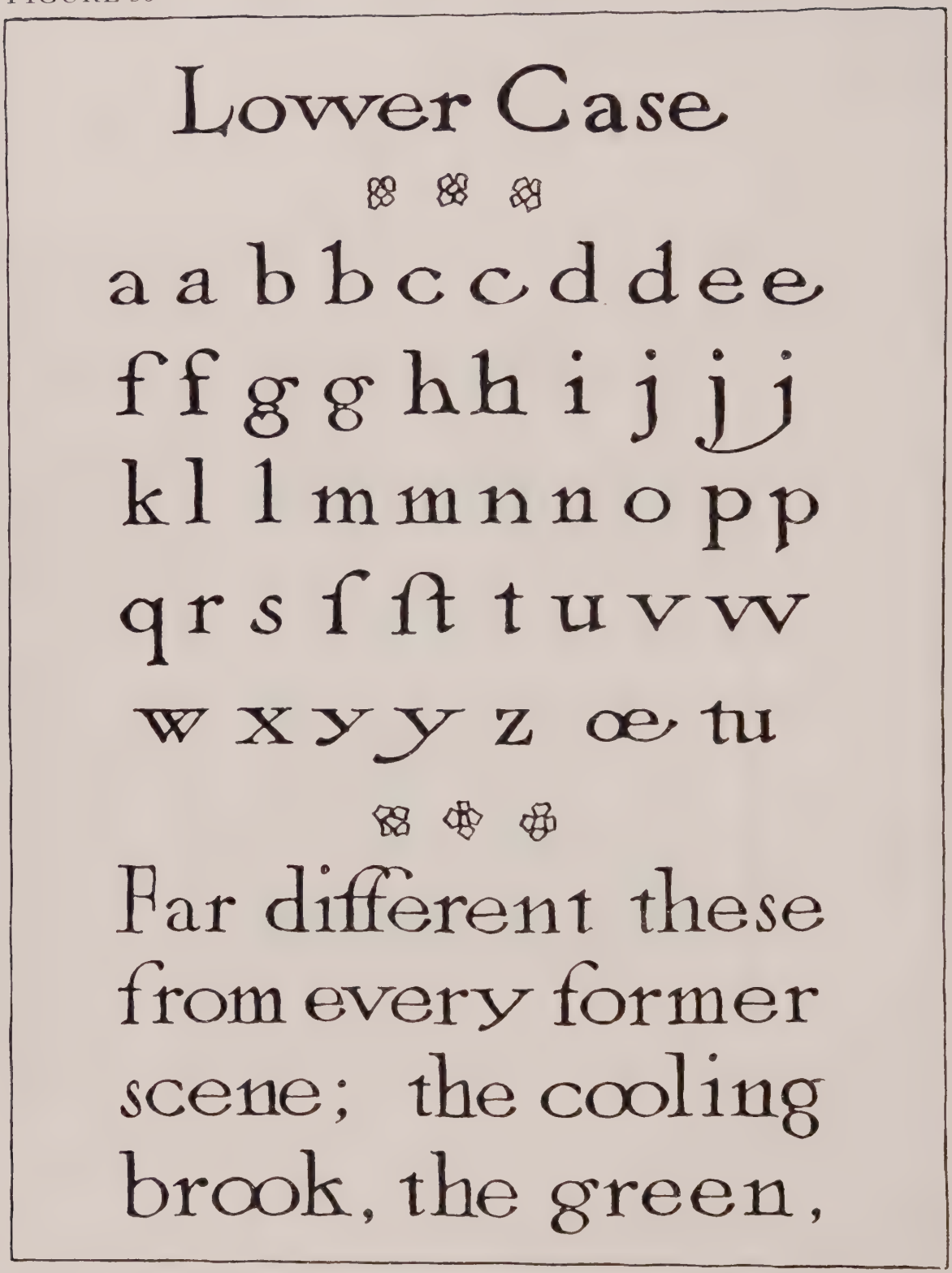
Modern Poster Alphabet LAURENCE SCHALL

FIGURE 55



Modern Poster Alphabet LAURENCE SCHALL

FIGURE 56


Lower Case
a a b b c c d d e e
f f g g h h i j j j
k l l m m n n o p p
q r s ſ ſt t u v w w
w x y y z œ tu
Far different these
from every former
scene; the cooling
brook, the green,

HARRY E. TOWNSEND

Modern small letters. For capitals see Figure 18

FIGURE 57

Brothers of the Book MISCELLANEA

The Links of Ancient Rome

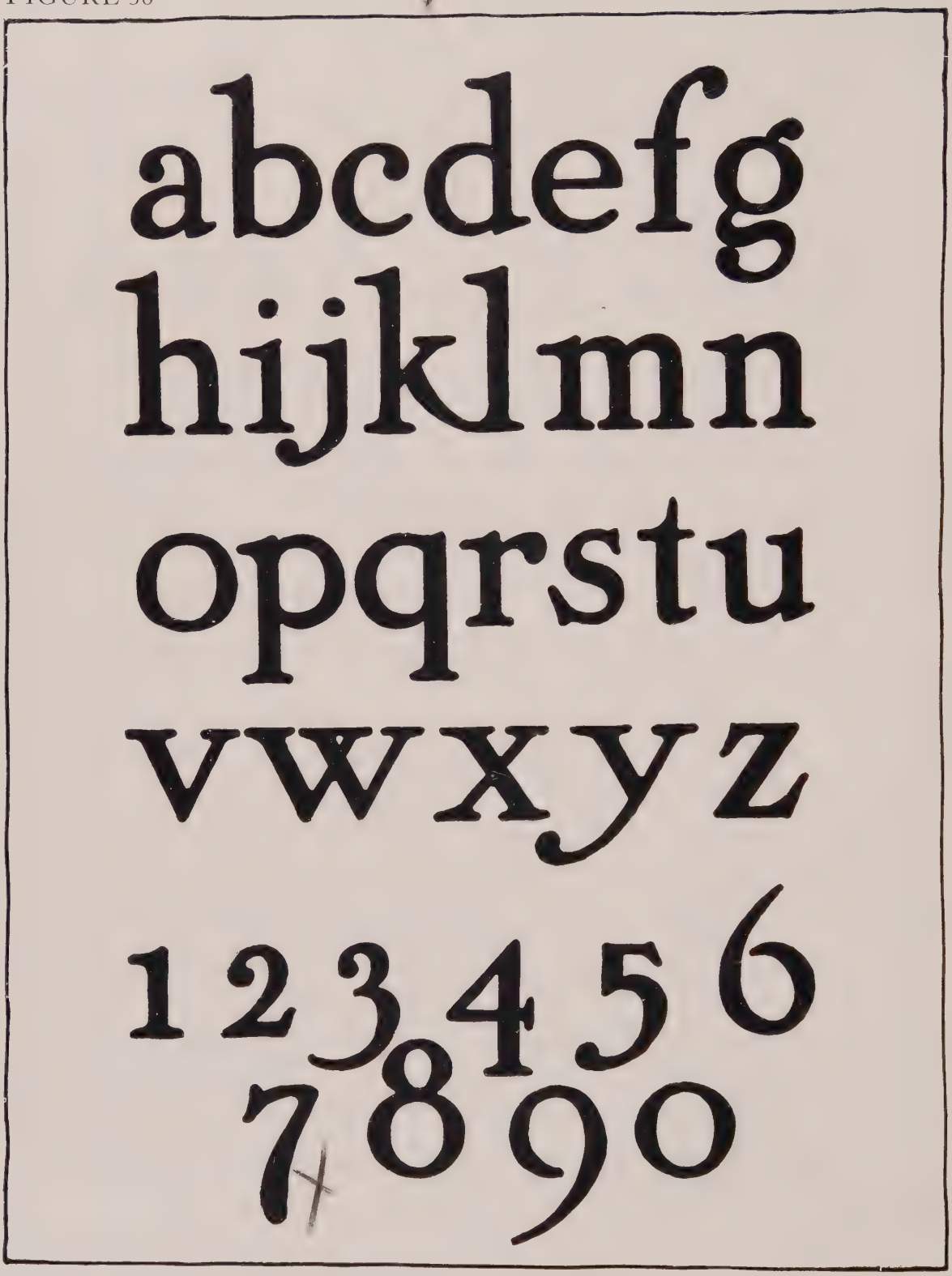
By Payson Sibley Wild
and Bert Leston Taylor

Privately printed for the Brothers of the Book-Fine Arts Building-Chicago
1912

WILL RANSOM

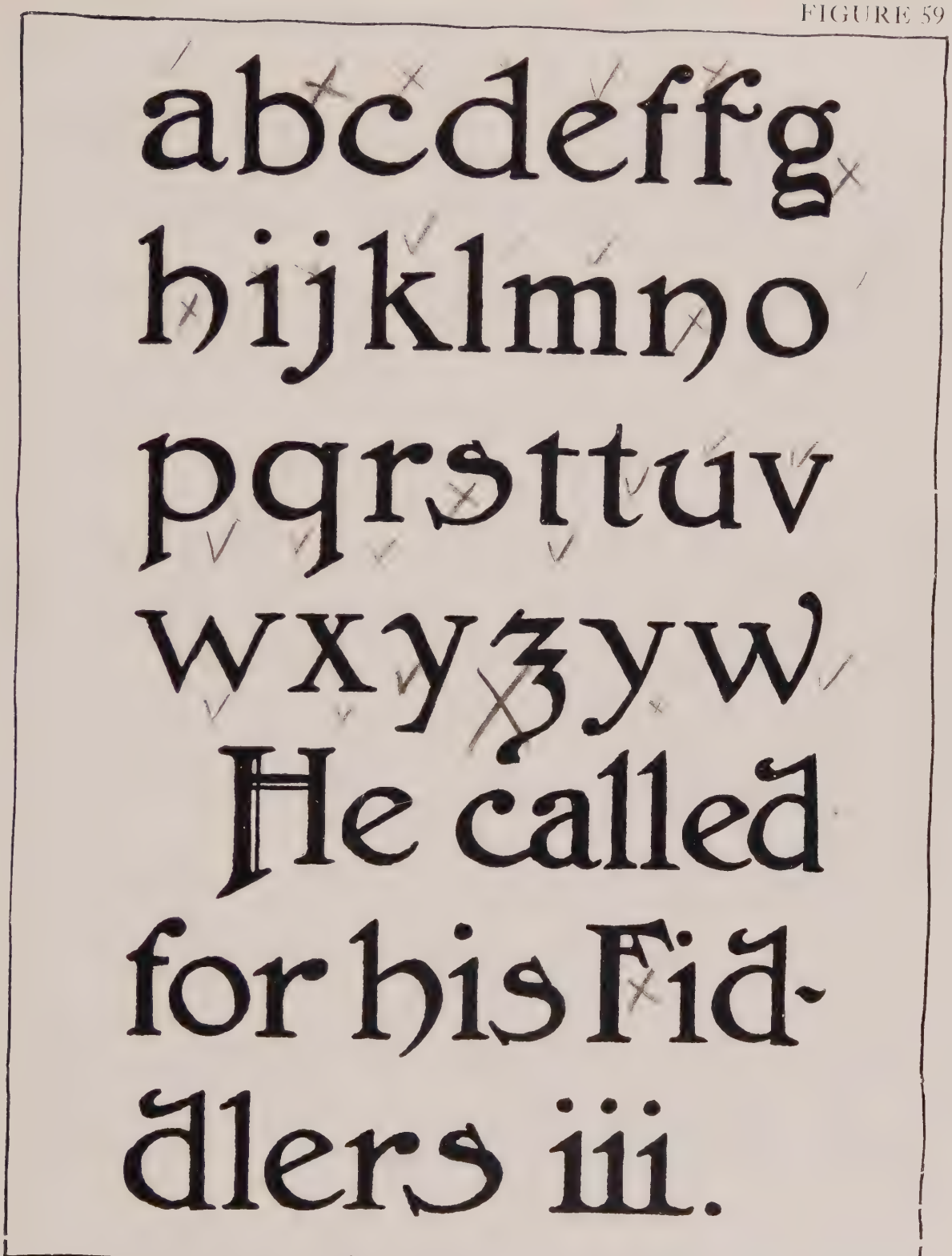
Cover design on rough paper

FIGURE 58



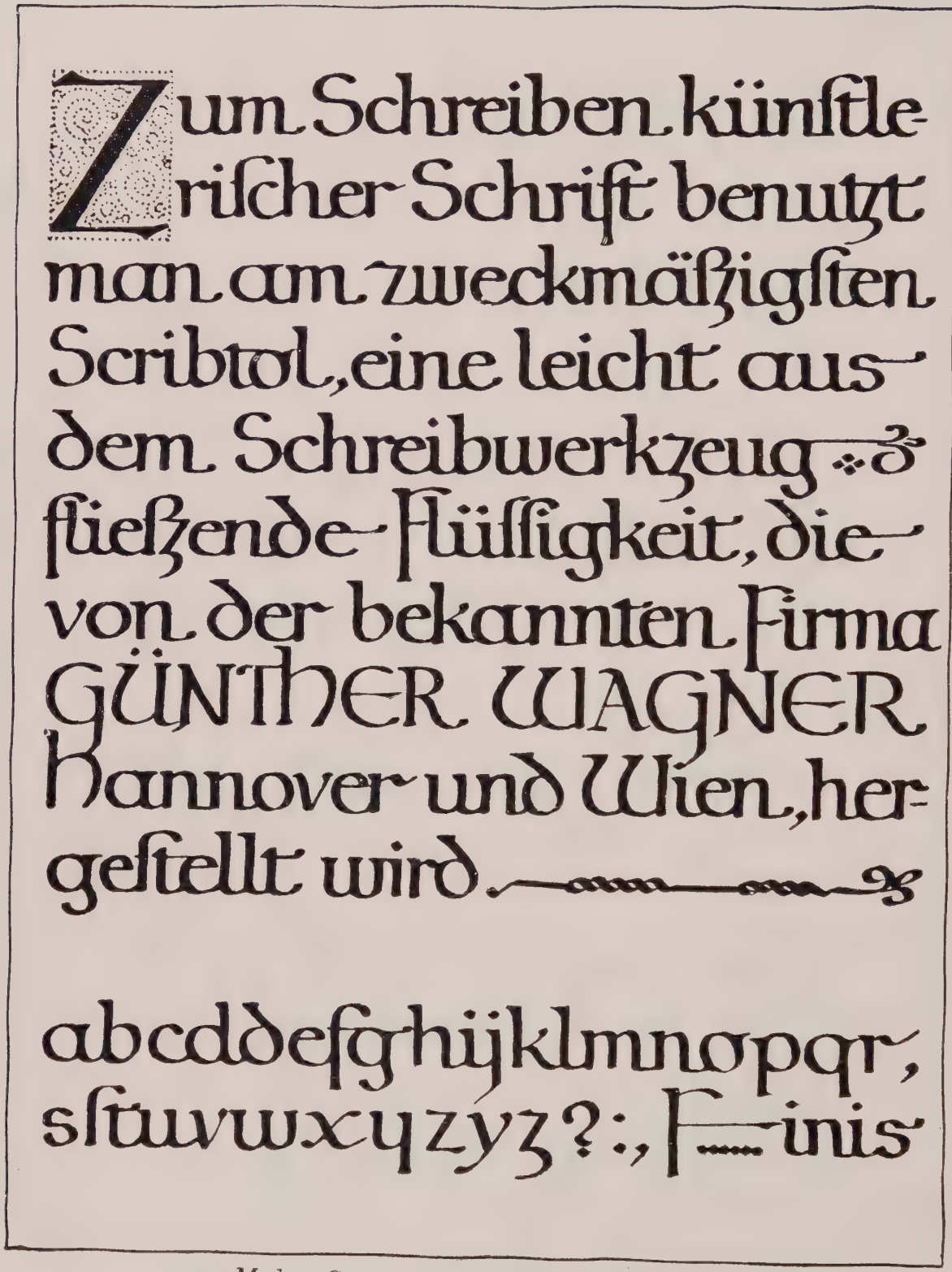
NORMAN P. HALL

Heavy modern small letters. For capitals see Figure 30

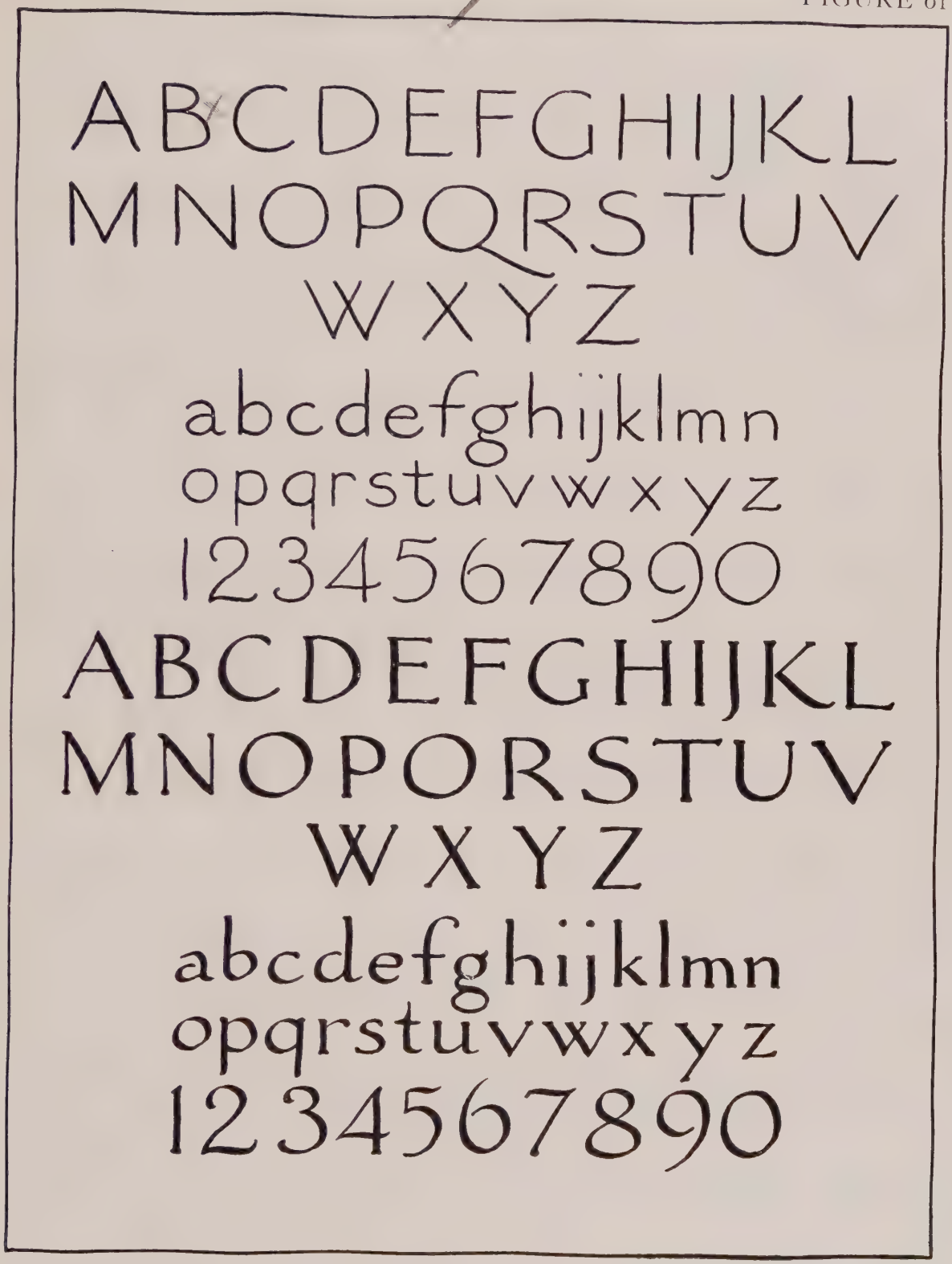


Small letters after Charles Robinson. For capitals see Figure 23

FIGURE 60



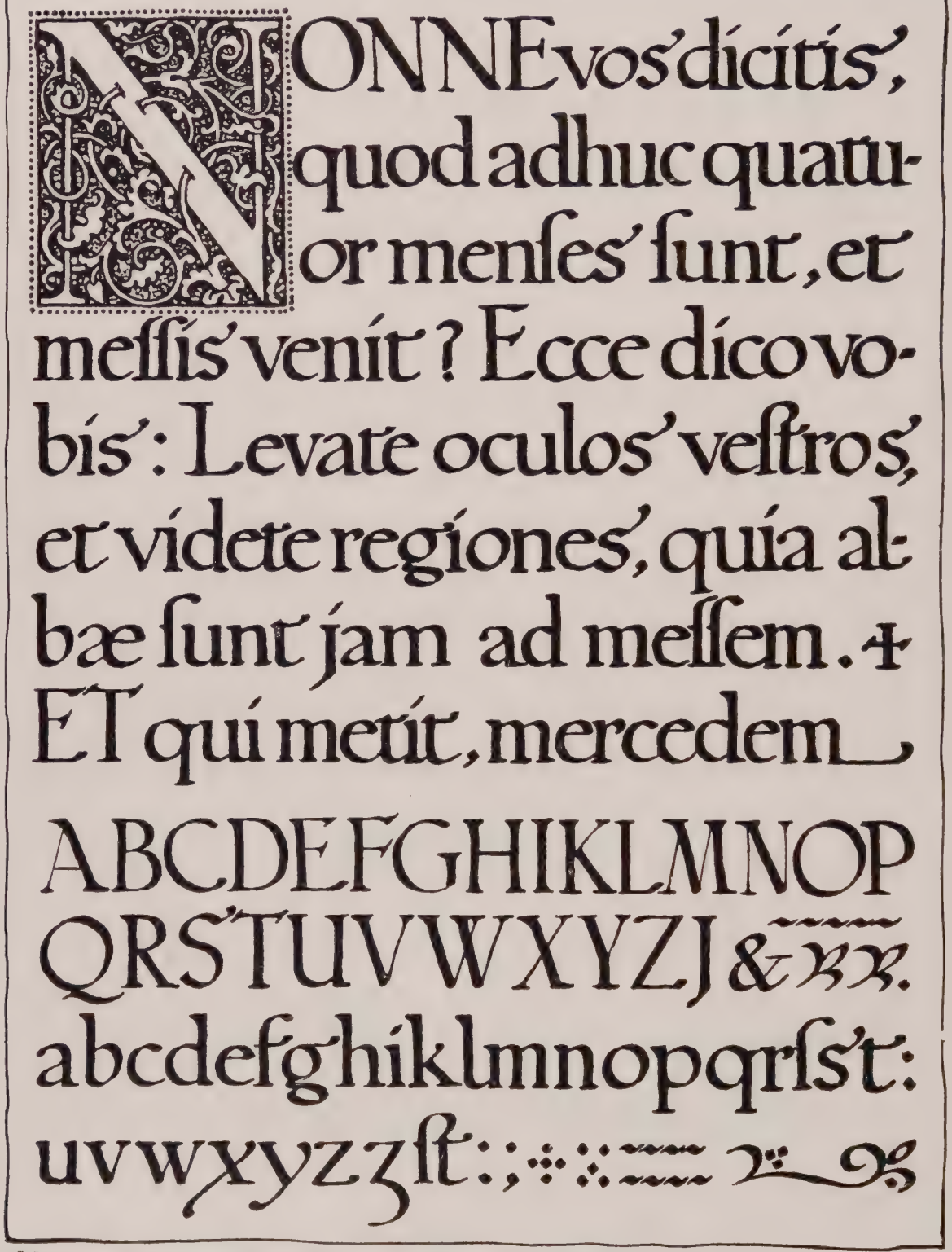
Modern German written linked small letters



HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Unaccented and accented alphabets and numerals, designed for rapid use

FIGURE 62


NONNE vos dicitis, quod adhuc quatuor menses sunt, et messis venit? Ecce dico vobis: Levate oculos vestros, et videte regiones, quia albæ sunt jam ad messem. ℣ ET qui metit, mercedem
ABCDEFGHIKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZJ &
abcdefghiklmnopqrsſt:
uvwxyzzſt:;

Modern Capitals and small letters influenced by Venetian type designs. May be written with the wide pen

SINGLE-STROKE-CAPITALS
ABCDEFGHI
JKLMNOPQ
RSTUVWXYZ
The small letters should be packed
closely together in forming words
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuv wxyz

SHADED-CAPS.
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ123456789

These letters acquire a
character from the nature
of the tool used—a steel
pen of medium size—

FREE-PEN-ALPHABETS
BASED-ON-CLASSIC-FORMS

JAMES HALL

Capitals and small letters for informal inscriptions

FIGURE 64

Modern German linked small letters

CHAPTER V

Italics

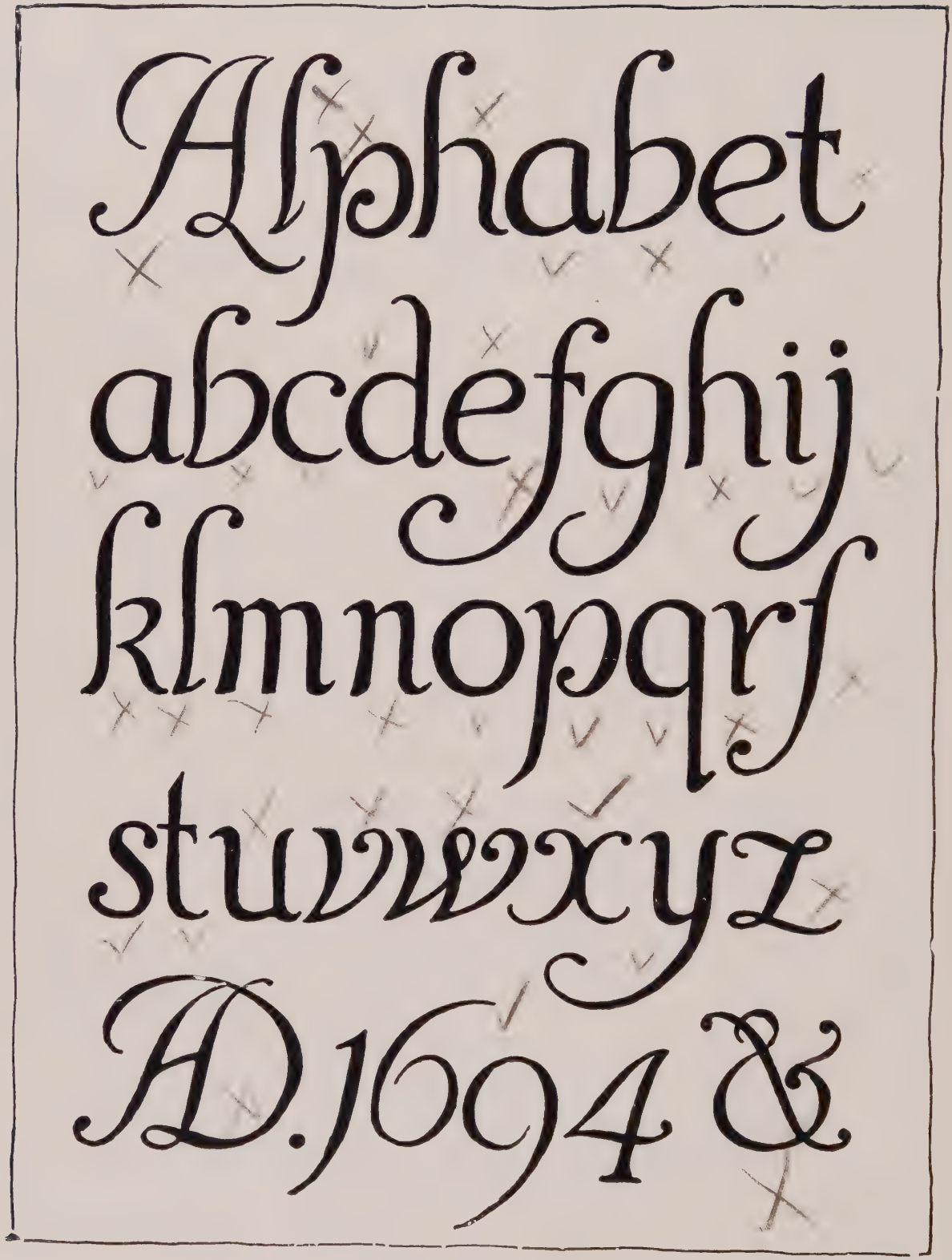
THE italic form came of the need for a rapid, cursive letter—the need which produced all the various families of small letters. While the calligrapher dealt in chronicles and Books of Hours, a slow and patiently-made letter served. But the literary men of the Renaissance burned with a desire for expression, and made for themselves a style of writing that could be used before the inspiration cooled. The patrons were also to be considered: a poem gained much from being clearly and gracefully written out. The times required that the work of scholars be done in a beautiful manner. The printers, when they came upon the scene, followed the fashion, and certain Aldine books, printed wholly in Italic (a style traditionally founded on the hand-writing of Petrarch, but engraved for type by Francesco of Bologna), attained and still hold a very high reputation.

The Spanish writing books of the sixteenth century furnish many beautiful italic forms, some of them verging upon linked script, and provide explicit directions for the writing of the letters stroke by stroke.

To the student who wishes to attain skill in direct writing, rather than in the more laborious and exact method of building up letters, a careful study of the italic is to be specially recommended. The forms, being immediately derived from written work, and never deeply influenced by any carved style, adapt themselves readily to the pen; and a mastery of them is excellent preparation for the more difficult Roman forms. The student should prepare himself, however, in both fields, by carefully building up a few exercises, on a scale larger than is possible to single-stroke writing, in order that he may investigate the actual drawing of the letters before attempting to write them directly.

In ruling for italics, one should draw a series of slant lines over the page, to avoid variations in the angle. These lines should be perfectly parallel, but may be at any interval. The most convenient method is to

FIGURE 65



FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN

Incised English script, from "Letters and Lettering"

FIGURE 66. *Italic Capitals. For small letters see Figure 67*

T. W. S.

set the paper obliquely on the drawing board, so that the T-square will fit the angle; when the slant lines have been ruled, the paper is reset in a vertical position.

There is no exact or authoritative angle of slope. In extreme styles the angle becomes as great as twenty-five or even thirty degrees from the vertical. From twelve to twenty degrees may be considered the normal range.

In estimating the space required by a given copy, it is safe to assume that the italic will take less than the Roman. In character it is affected by all the means employed to vary the Roman, and in addition to these, by a number of hand-writing features, turned-up serifs and the like. In its most formal style it is simply the Roman letter slanted. Where individuality is desired it leans toward script.

Italic is usually well suited to work which suggests a casual or spontaneous motive. While not so legible at long range as Roman, it has an effect of emphasis combined with elegance not easily obtained in any other way. In the form of a nearly vertical script-italic, drawn up in panels, a quaint dignity appears in it. A greater slant and some judicious flourishing of the capitals gives one a rather elaborate medium which was beautifully used by the Louis XV engravers. It may also be effectively used in connection with Roman, following the Georgian or Colonial fashion; in this the italic is somewhat flourished, and is reserved for connectives and unimportant words, the Roman capitals serving for emphasis. Where used with many italics, the Roman should be varied somewhat — the round letters being accented in the direction of the italic slant.

The invention of the typewriter has, to a large extent, done away with the practice of beautiful court hands and engrossing scripts. While penmanship is doubtless more rich in individual character than ever, beauty has passed from its fashion. The student will find more suggestive material, of assistance in developing fine script letters, and thence italics, in old and official chirography.

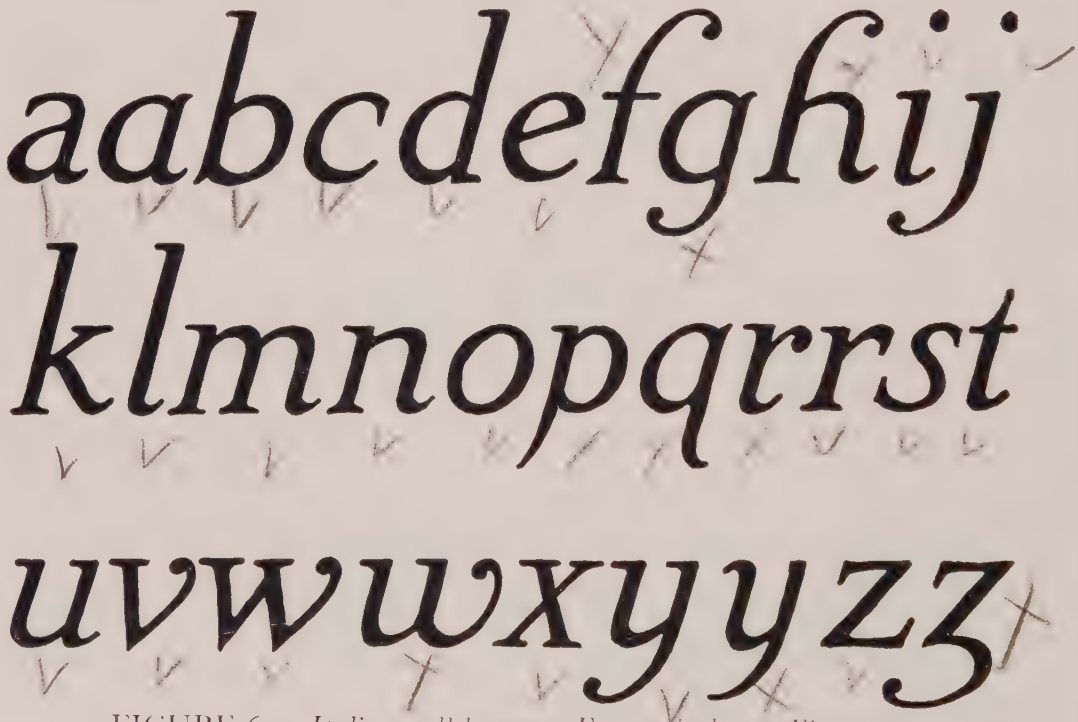
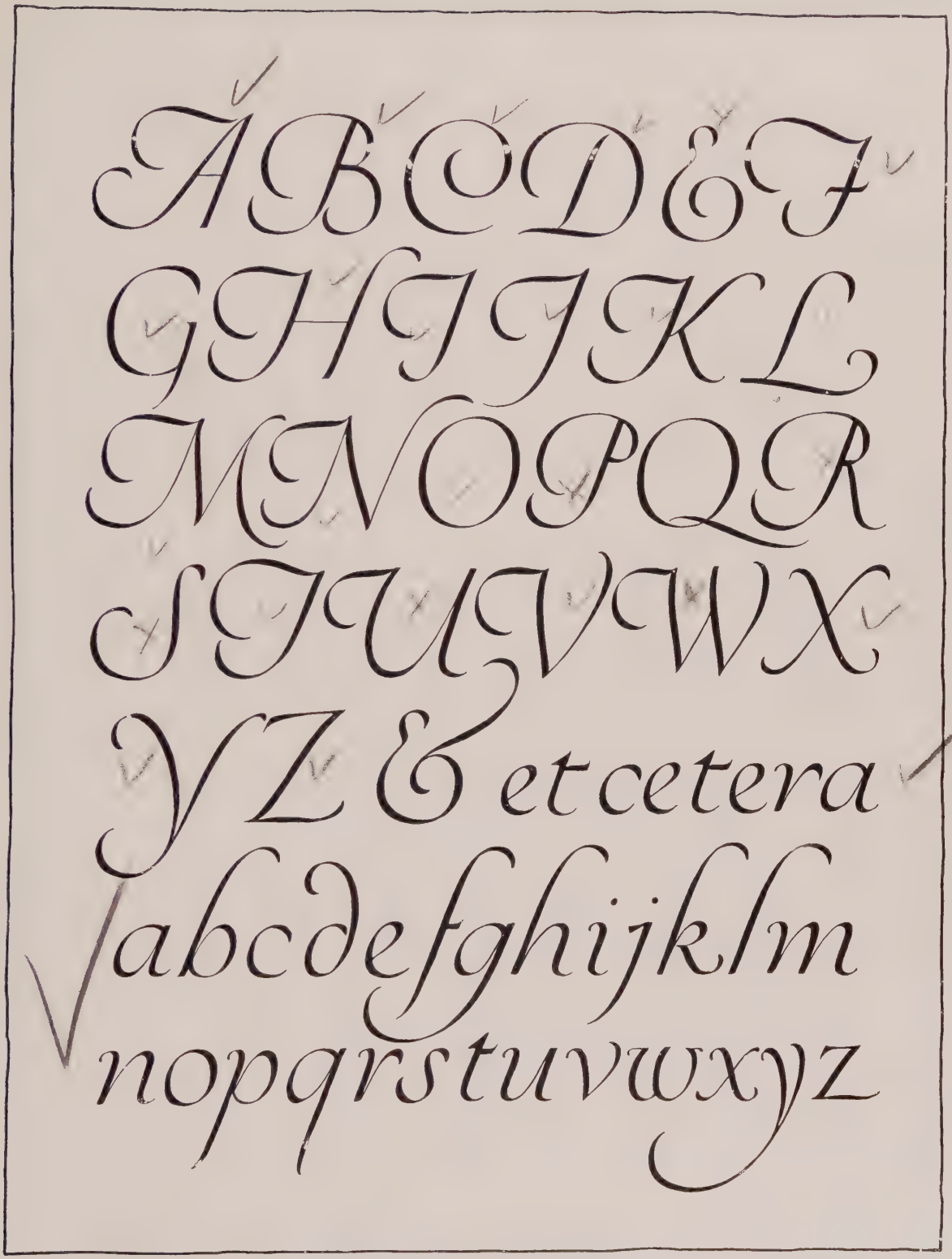


FIGURE 67. *Italic small letters. For capitals see Figure 66*

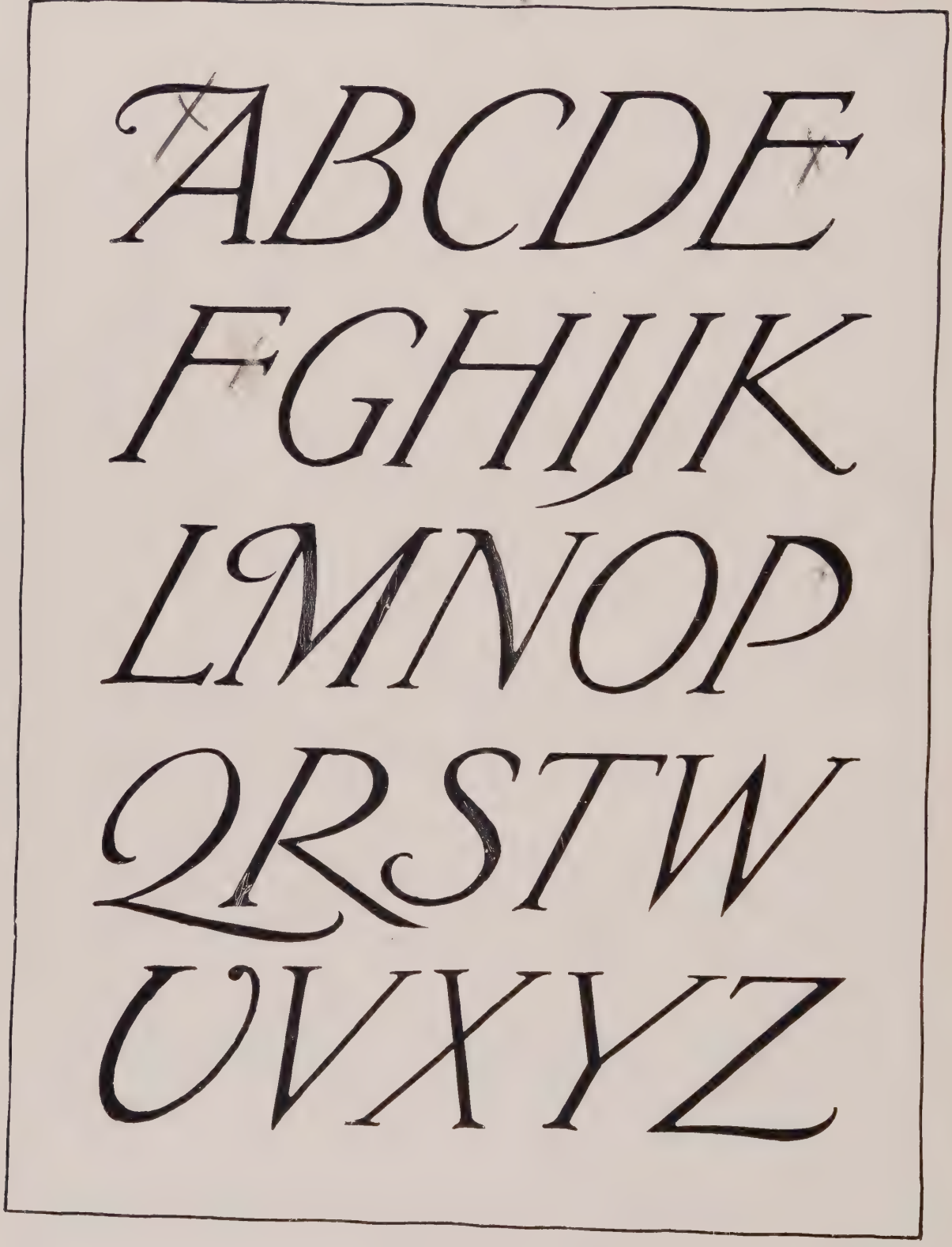
T. W. S.



LAWRENCE ROSA

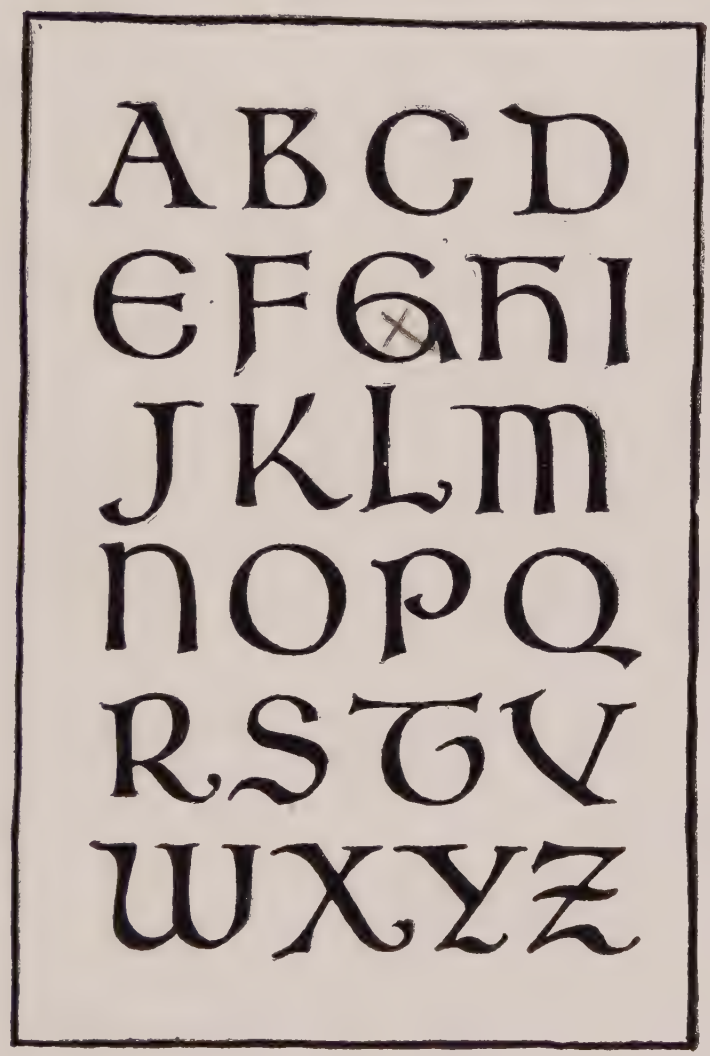
Italic-script Capitals and small letters. A fine variant of the French engraver's manner

FIGURE 69



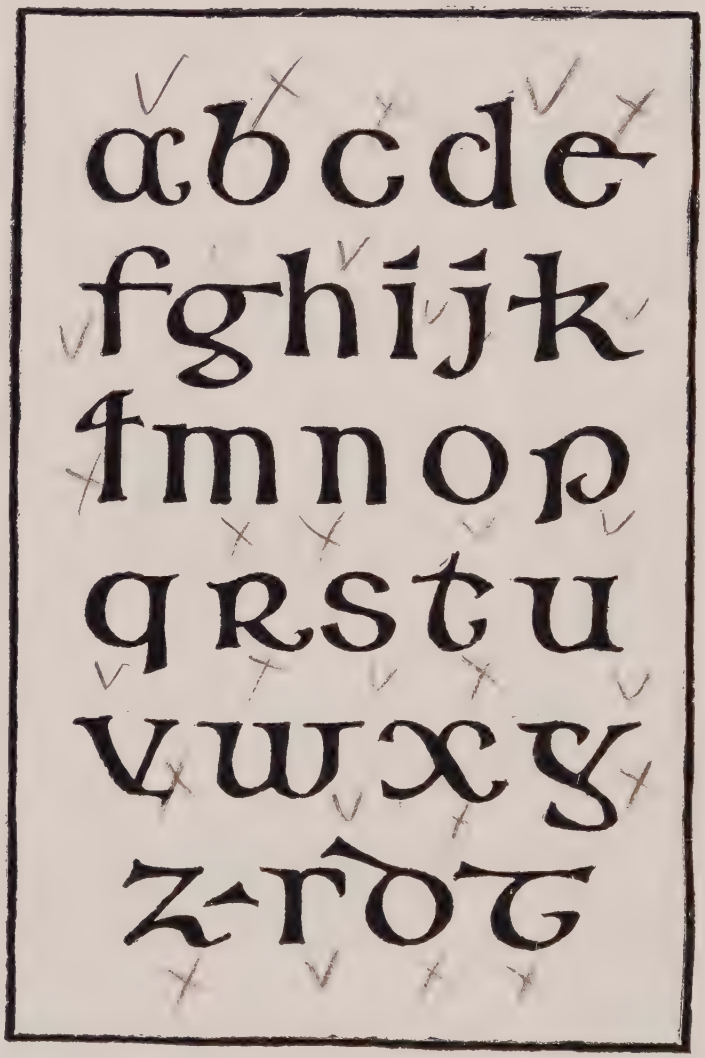
Italic Capitals, extreme slant

T. W. S.



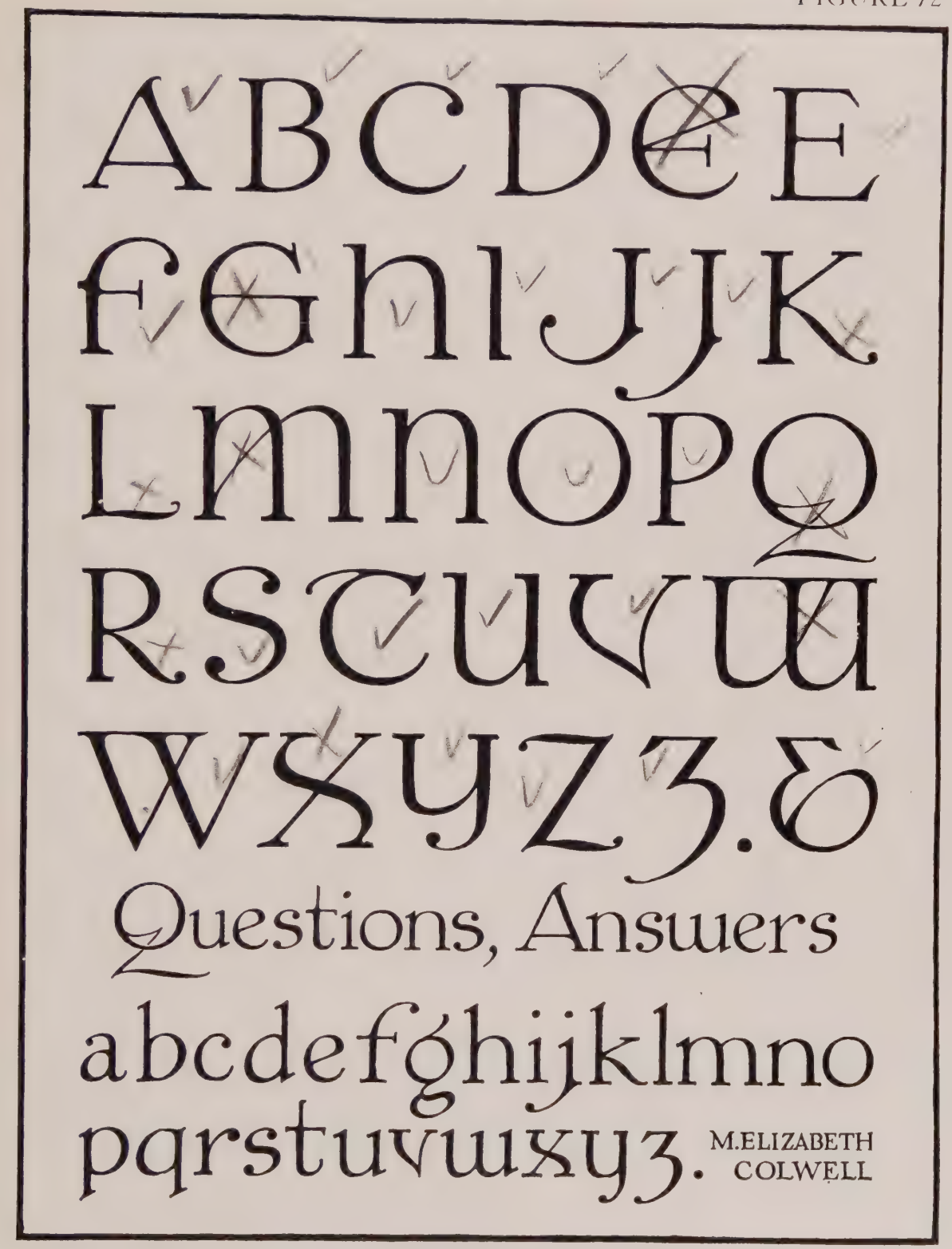
Adapted Roman Alphabet LAURENCE SCHALL

FIGURE 71



Adapted Roman Alphabet LAURENCE SCHALL

FIGURE 72

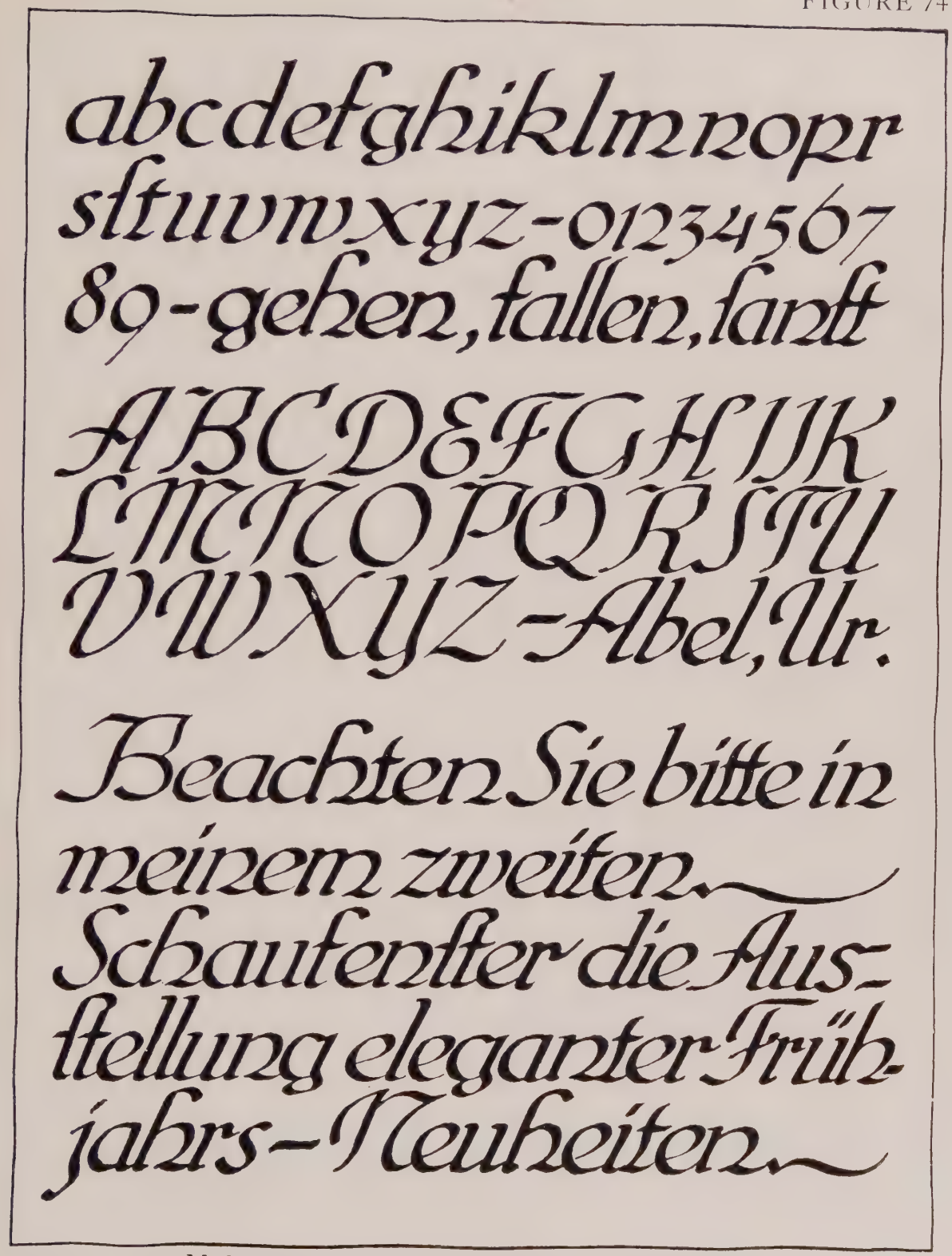


An Individual Roman Alphabet M. ELIZABETH COLWELL

FIGURE 73

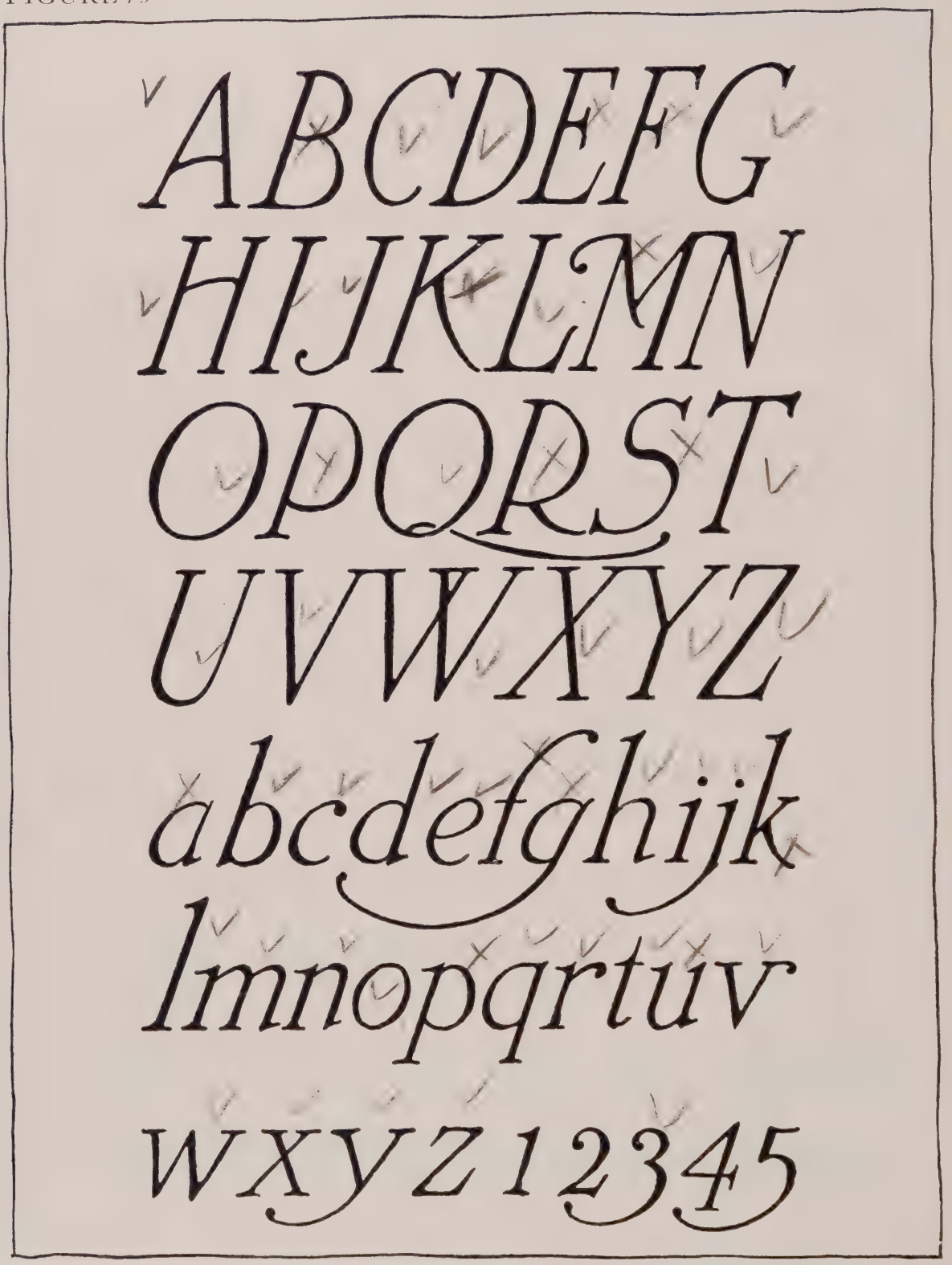
HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Italics with flourished Capitals, written with a wide pen



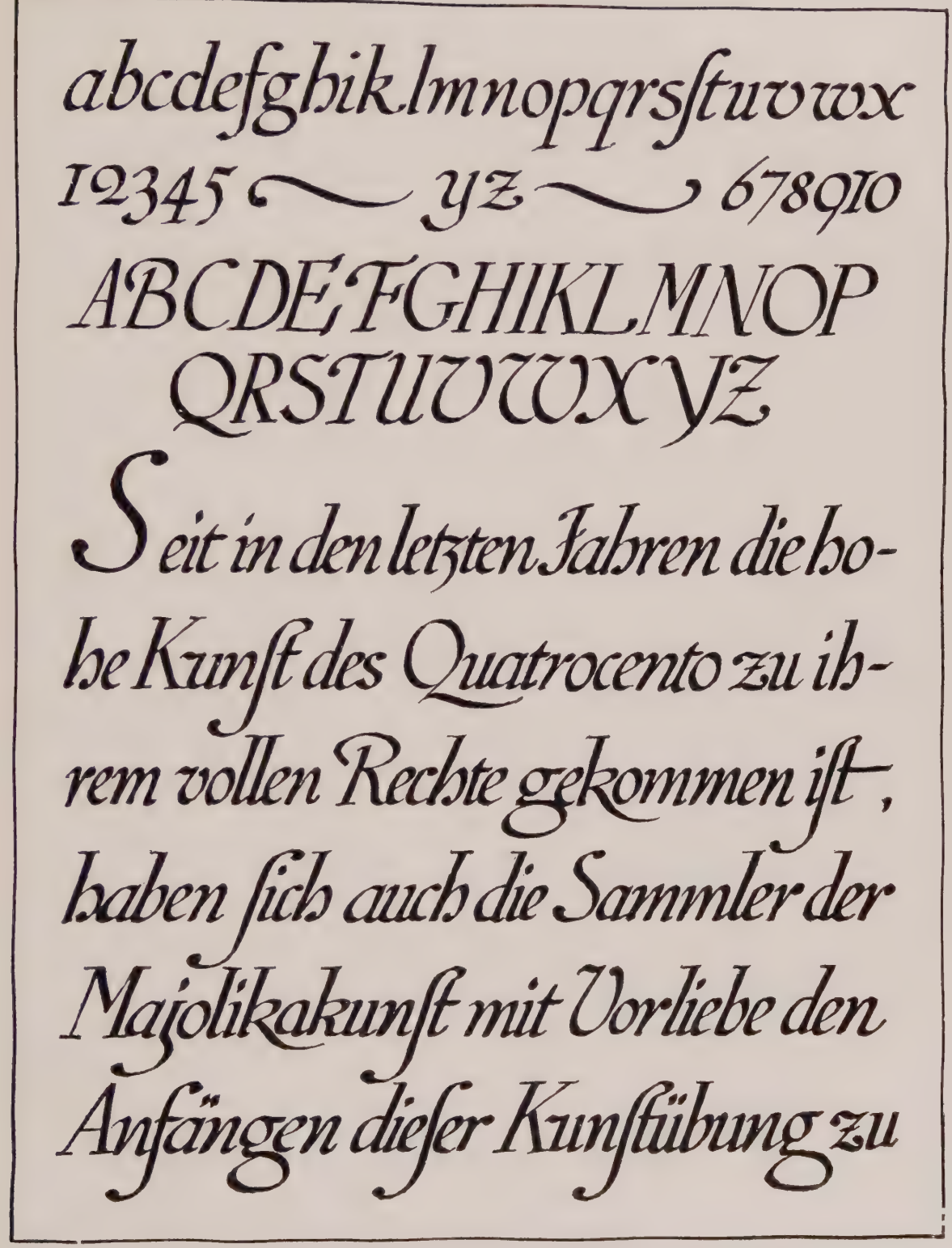
Modern German script-italics, written with a wide pen

FIGURE 75



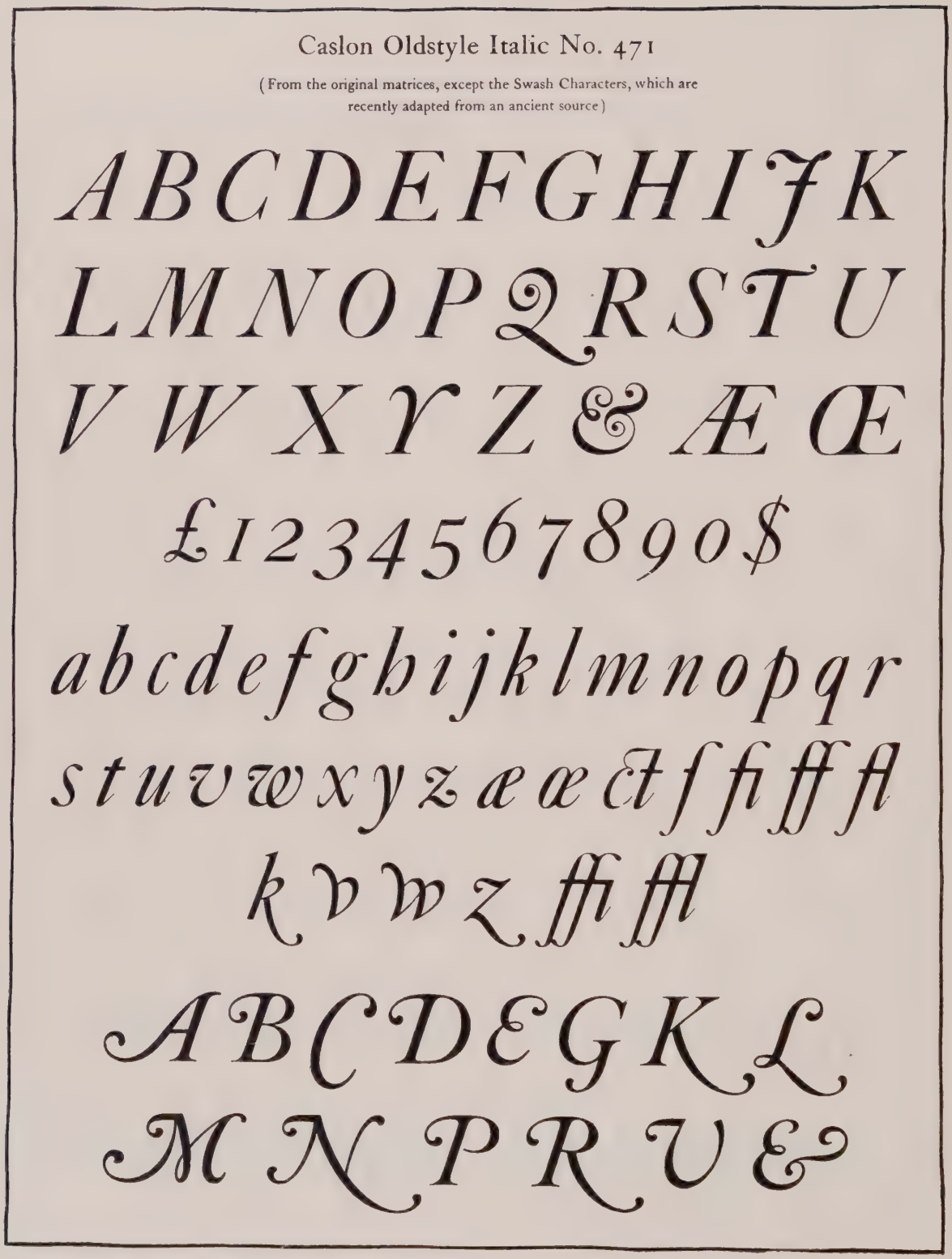
NORMAN P. HALL

Italic Capitals, small letters, and numerals



Modern German Italic Capitals, small letters, and numerals

FIGURE 77



Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company

Cloister Italic

A B C D E F G H I J
K L M N O P Q R S T U V
W X Y Z &

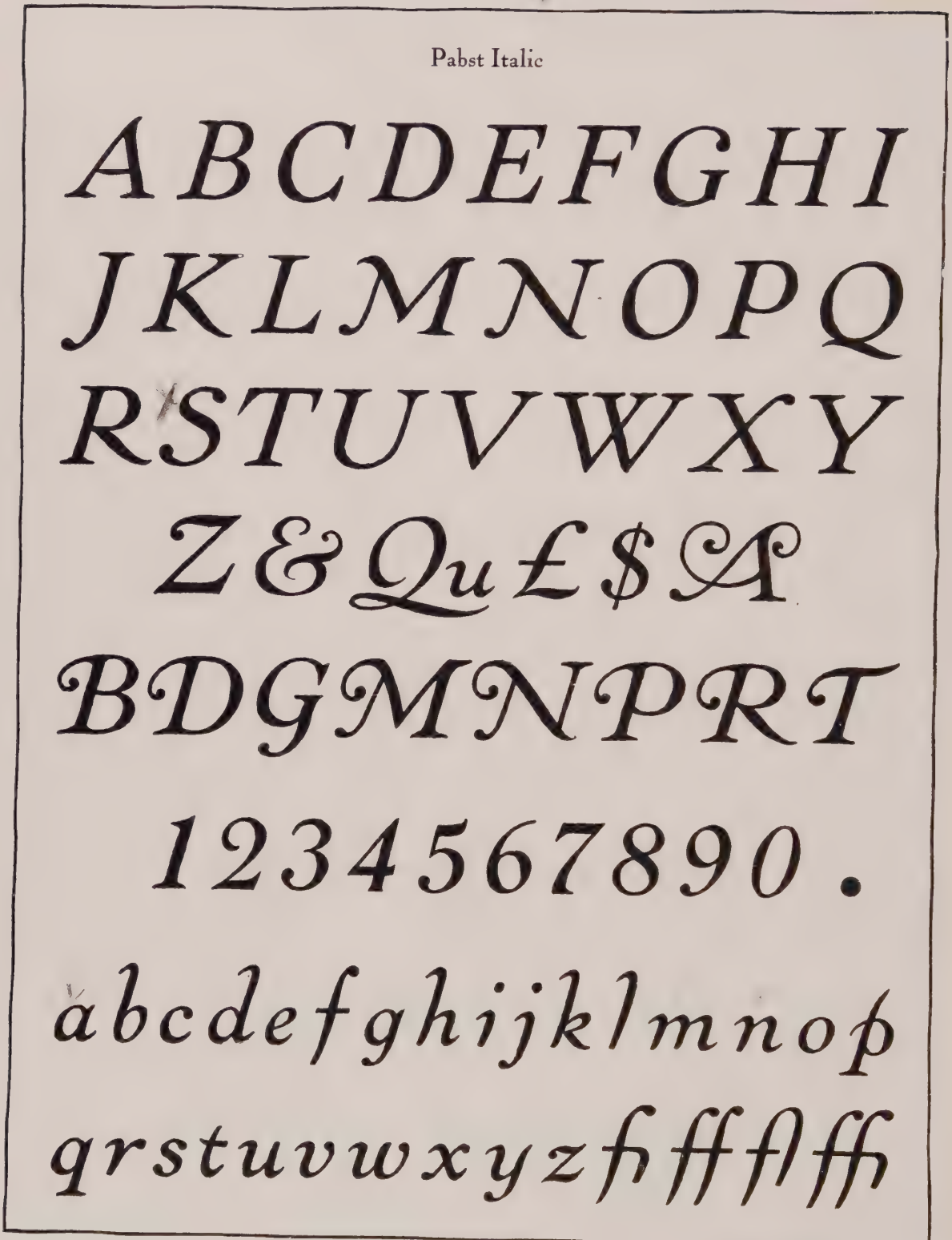
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s
t u v w x y z v w k ct st fi ff fl

$ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

A B D E G J M N P
Qu R T U Y

Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company

FIGURE 79



Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company

CHAPTER VI

The Gothic Forms

IN the course of its decline the classic Roman letter went through many changes, taking on characteristic styles in many lands. Some of these were of great beauty and interest, but so far from the letters with which we are familiar as to be virtually illegible to us. One, however, attained a fairly definite form, and was used with considerable regularity for centuries; this was the Uncial, which was also known as the Lombardic letter.

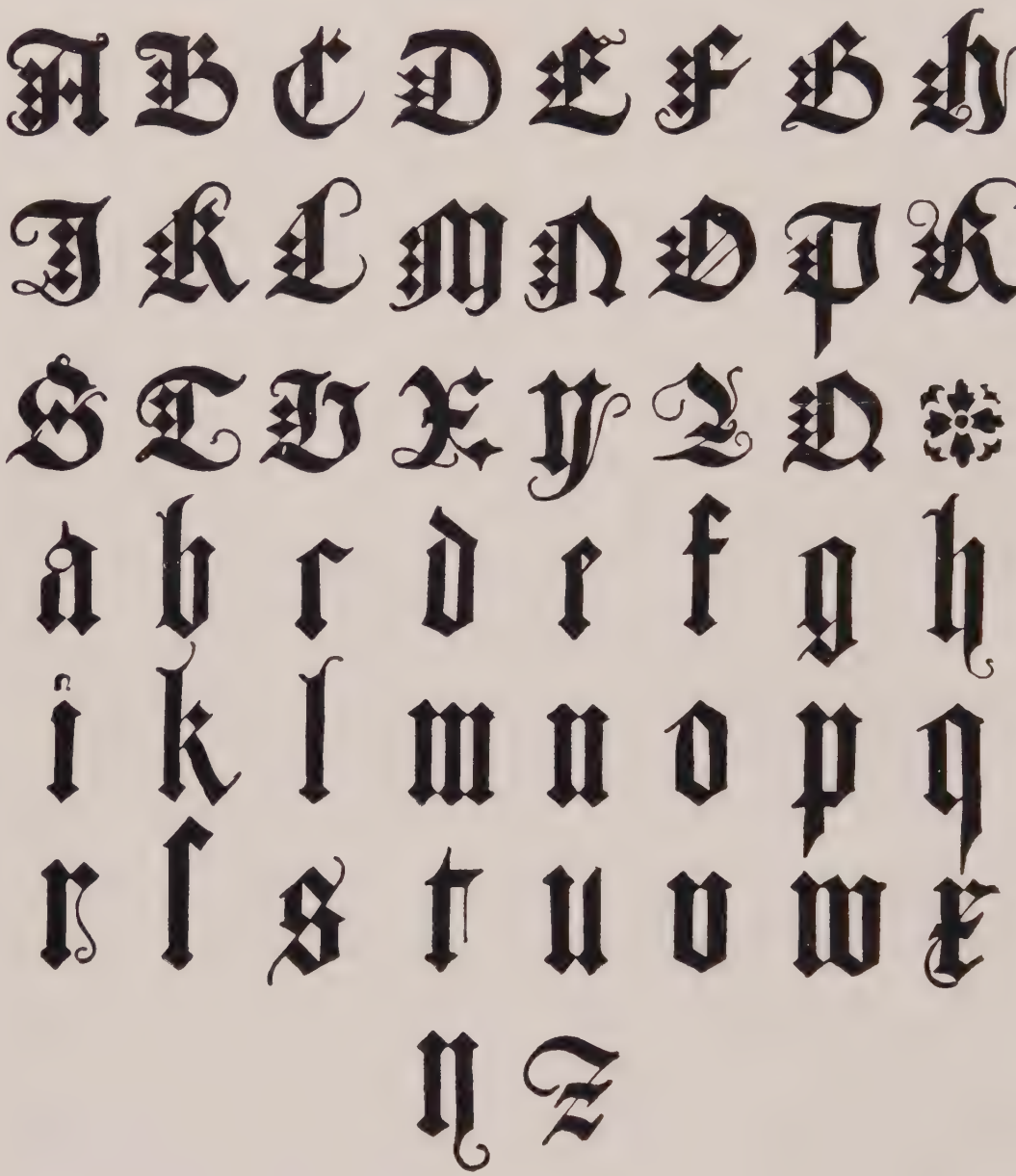
As this style spread northward it came to be written in a more condensed form, very heavy, with spiky terminals; — the usual result in variations of a Germanic origin. This variant called Black-letter was strong and rich, but not legible except to the experienced eye. In using it for missals and Books of Hours it became convenient, because the contents of a page could not be taken in at a glance, to mark the initials strongly; also the letters beginning the separate verses. Thus the capitals became extremely heavy and complicated in design.

At the time of the invention of printing, Black-letter and the more open variants were in common use. Many of the earlier types were founded on these letters. Caxton took six different fonts of them to England. Jenson gave up the use of his beautiful Roman letter for them, because they saved space. In Germany they survive in common use, scarcely altered from the types cut by Peter Schoeffer of Mainz, except in some loss of virility.

In the nomenclature used by printers and type-founders these letters are called Old English, or Text. Historically they are called Gothics. As the historical name relates the style correctly to the use of the word Gothic in the arts, it will be used here, since we are considering letters and not types. (In printing, a square sanserif Roman, with strokes of equal weight, is called Gothic.) To distinguish further, the heavy forms of letters in which the black stroke overpowers the enclosed white, will be referred to as Black-letter; the more open forms as Round Gothic.

The Uncial letter, shifting through the Half Uncial, bridged a gap between the classic Roman capitals and the small letter. This Uncial,

FIGURE 80



ALBERT DÜRER, 1500

Black-letter Capitals and small letters

while essentially a capital, has no small letter of its own, since the Gothic small letter is a later development. But the Uncial as the ancestor of the Gothic or Text capital, may properly be used with Gothic small letters.

FIGURE 81. *Black letter written with a wide pen*

HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

The Gothic capital in fact, grew out of this association of Uncials with Black-letter; its chief object was to mark a place, to emphasize a beginning. It grew heavy and complicated, isolating itself from the general tone of the page. Its history and design alike forbid that it be used alone.

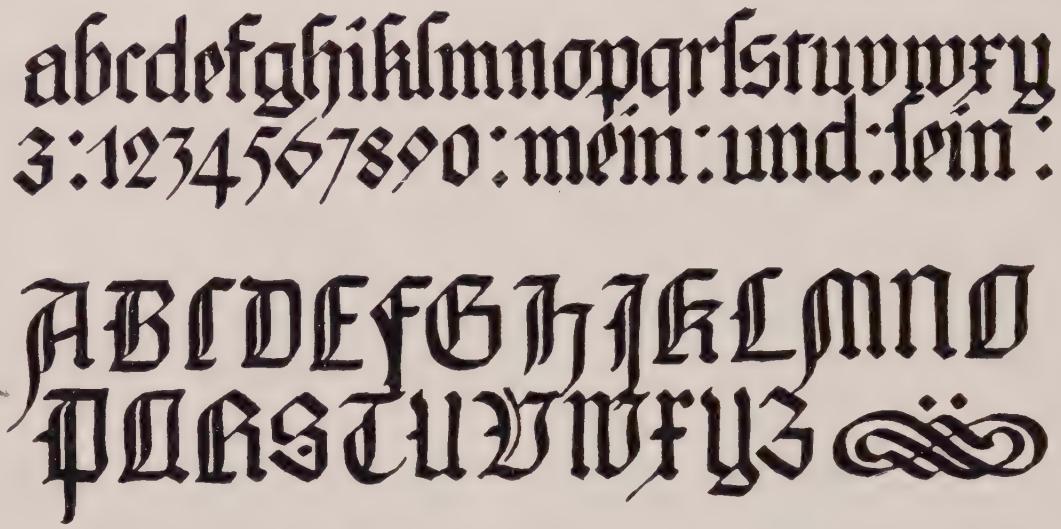


FIGURE 82. *Modern Round Gothic capitals, small letters and numerals*

To state the matter again. Uncials (Lombard Gothic Capitals) may be used solid, without small letters. Uncials may be used as capitals with Round Gothic or Black-letter small letters. Round Gothic and Black-letter capitals (Old English) must be used with small letters, never as solid capitals. To the last statement an experienced designer may find an occasional exception. It does not apply to the simpler forms, in which the Roman influence is strongly felt, such as the Troy and Chaucer types of William Morris.

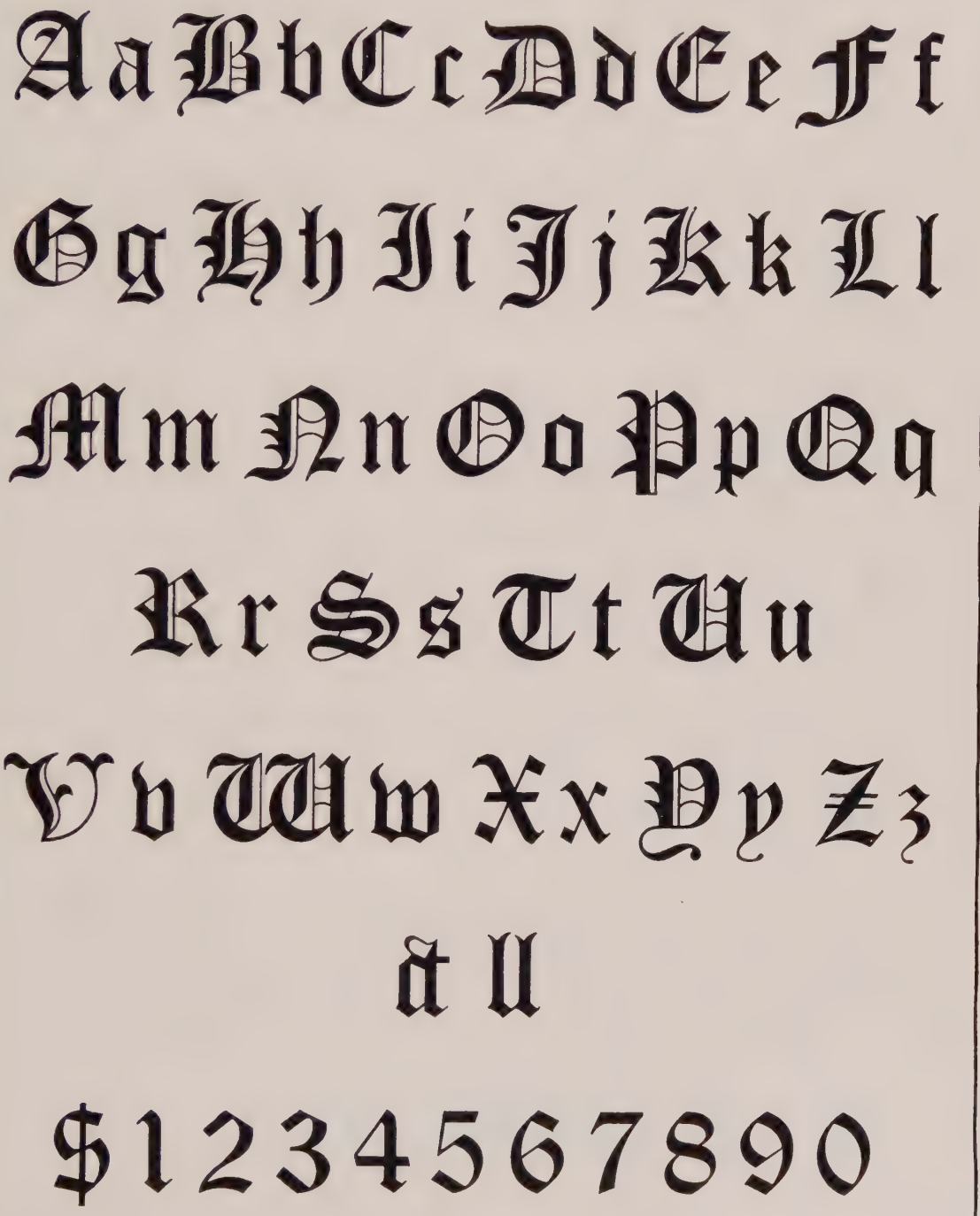
Gothic letters afford a greater variety than other styles, chiefly because they were never fully developed. The plainer forms of Round Gothic and Black-letter may be executed easily — written, in fact — with a wide stub or quill pen. This accomplishment requires some practice, however, and careful ruling-up, both with horizontal and vertical guides. See Figure 89.

Black-letter is an open field for the letterer because it is not practicable to produce its best effects with type. At its height it is a rich, virile style, bound closely together, letter to letter, and legible only to the accustomed eye. Hence one should be careful to employ it only in brief inscriptions, or in combinations easily recognized by the average reader.

It is not necessary to cumber the memory with the intricate drawing of the Text capitals. The Uncial form, on the other hand, is easily drawn and can be frequently used, as can also the plainer styles of Round Gothic and Black-letter. The drawing of these should be thoroughly mastered and practiced by the student of lettering.

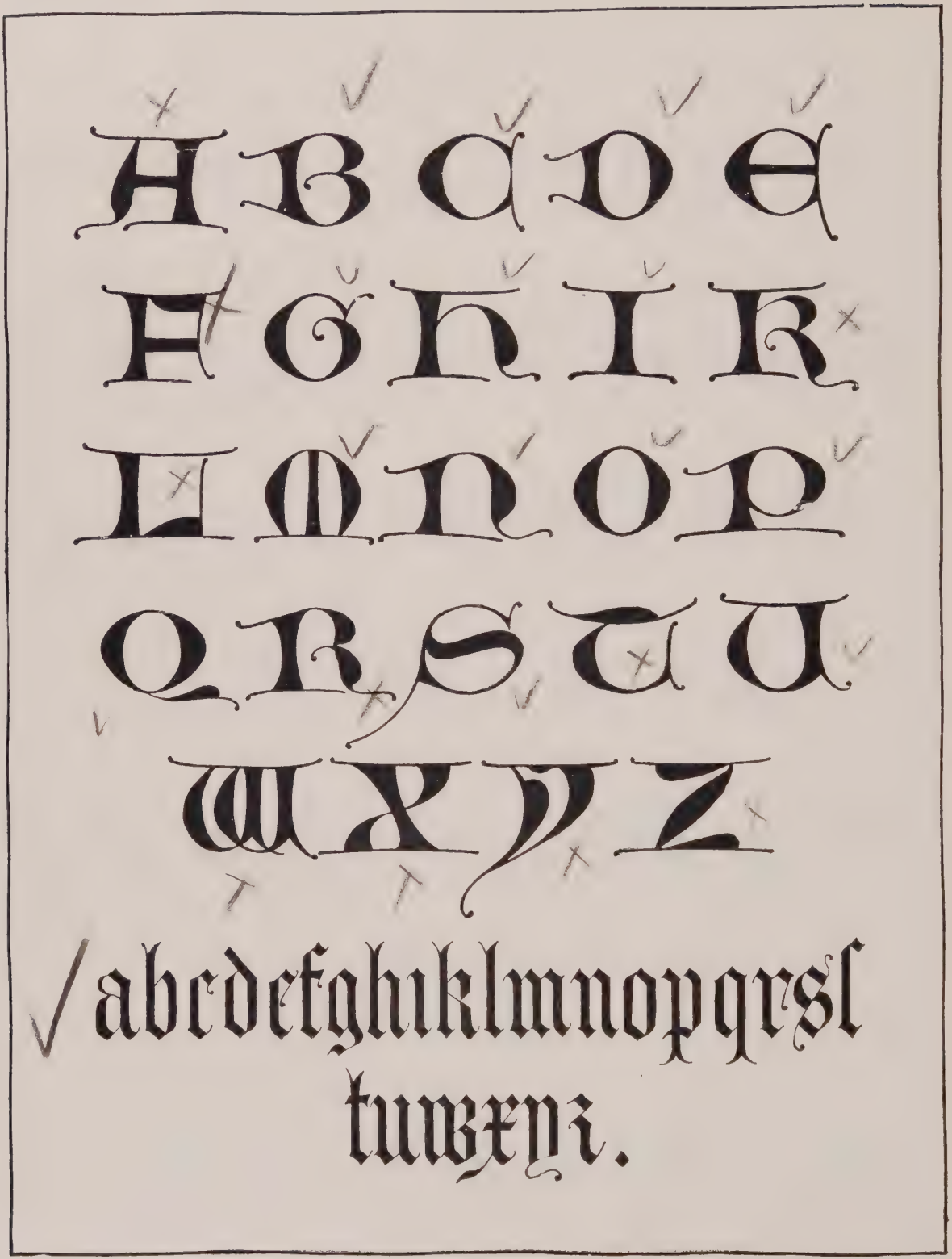
FIGURE 83

Cloister Black



Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company

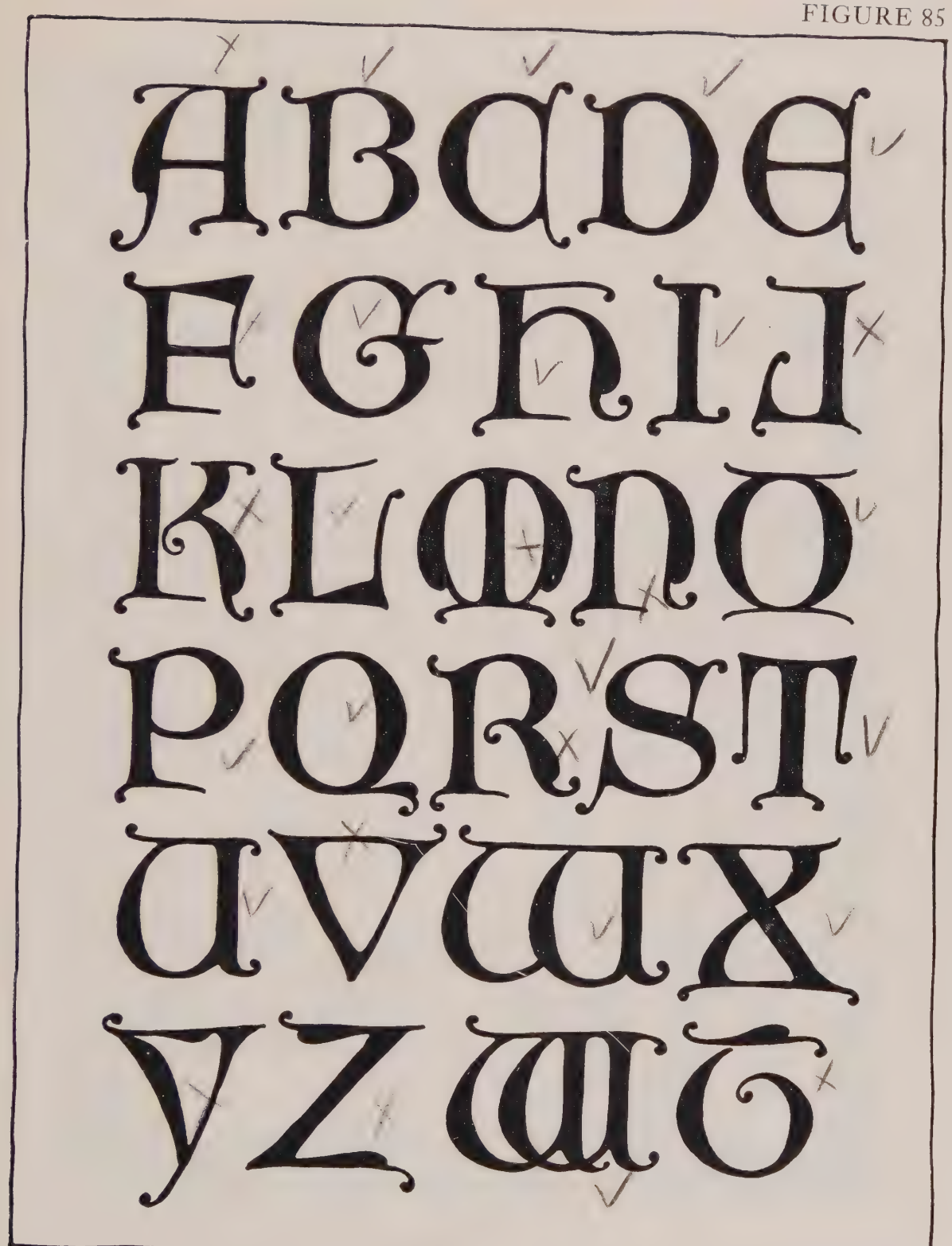
FIGURE 84



From a 14th Century MS.

Uncial Capitals with narrow Gothic small letters

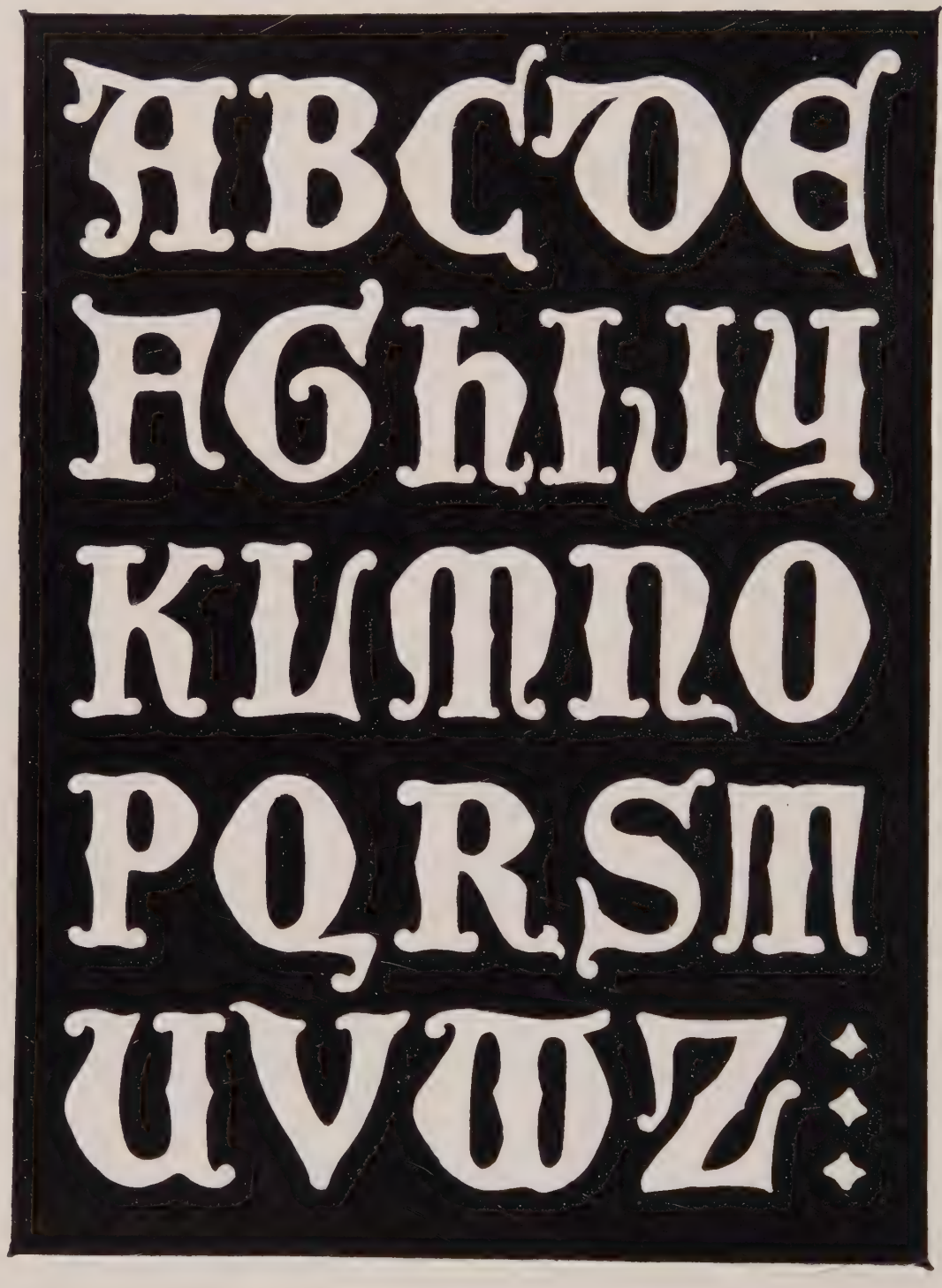
FIGURE 85



FRED STEARNS

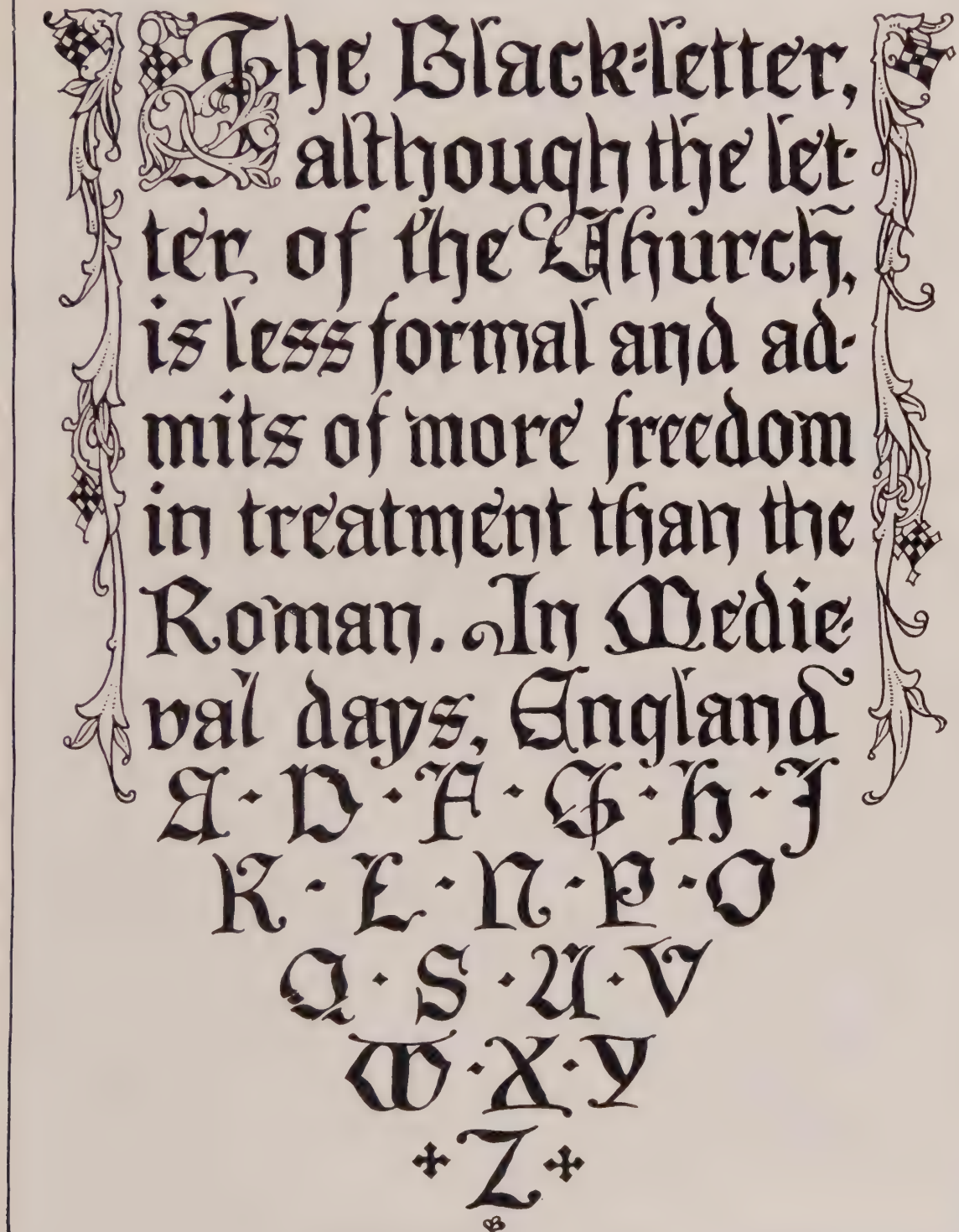
Uncial (Lombardic) Gothic Capitals

FIGURE 86



HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

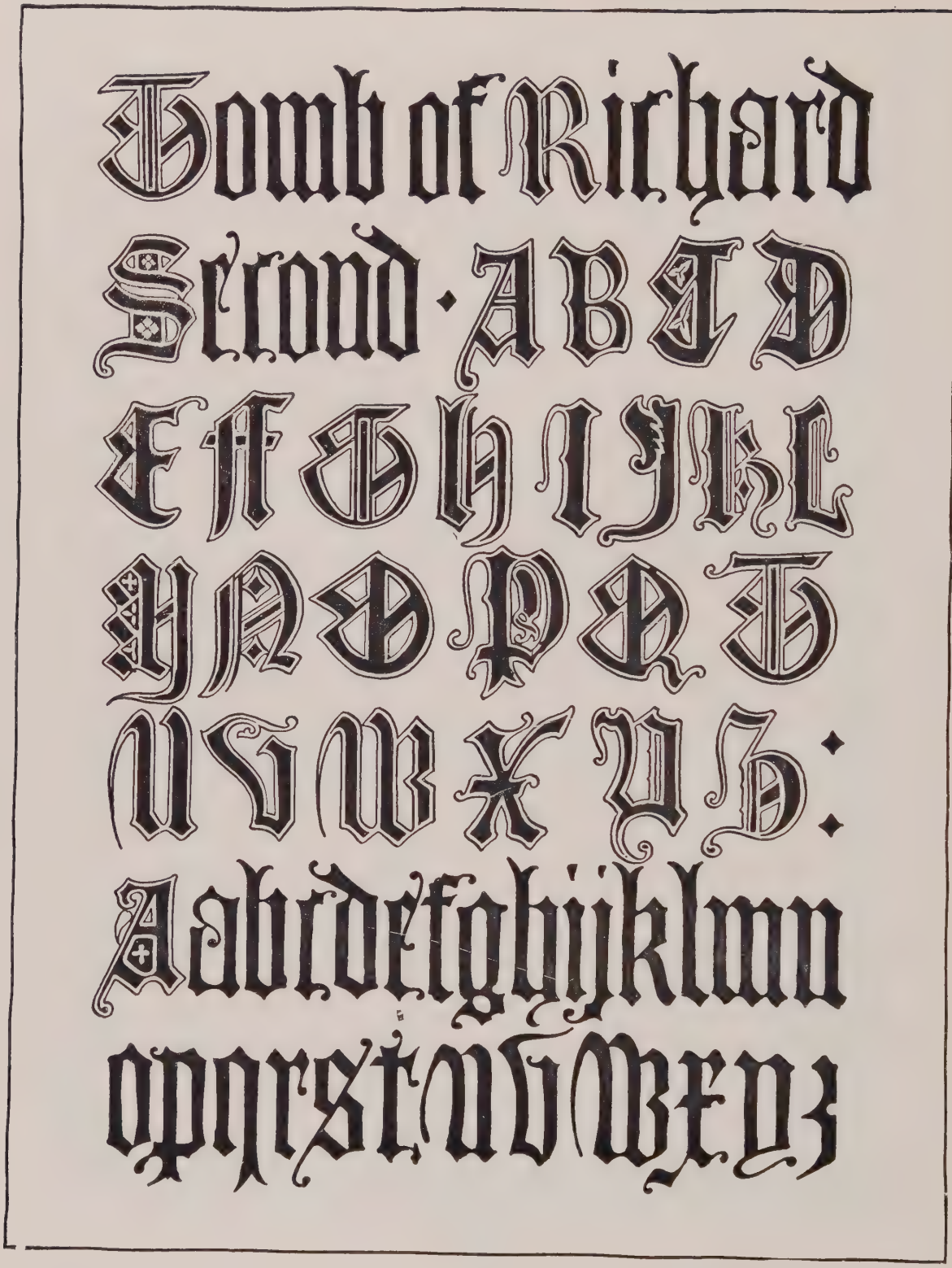
Italian Gothic Capitals. Adapted from an inscription in silver repousse


The Black-letter,
although the let-
ter of the Church,
is less formal and ad-
mits of more freedom
in treatment than the
Roman. In Medie-
val days, England
A · D · F · G · h · J
K · L · N · P · O
Q · S · U · V
W · X · Y
Z

CHARLES H. BARNARD

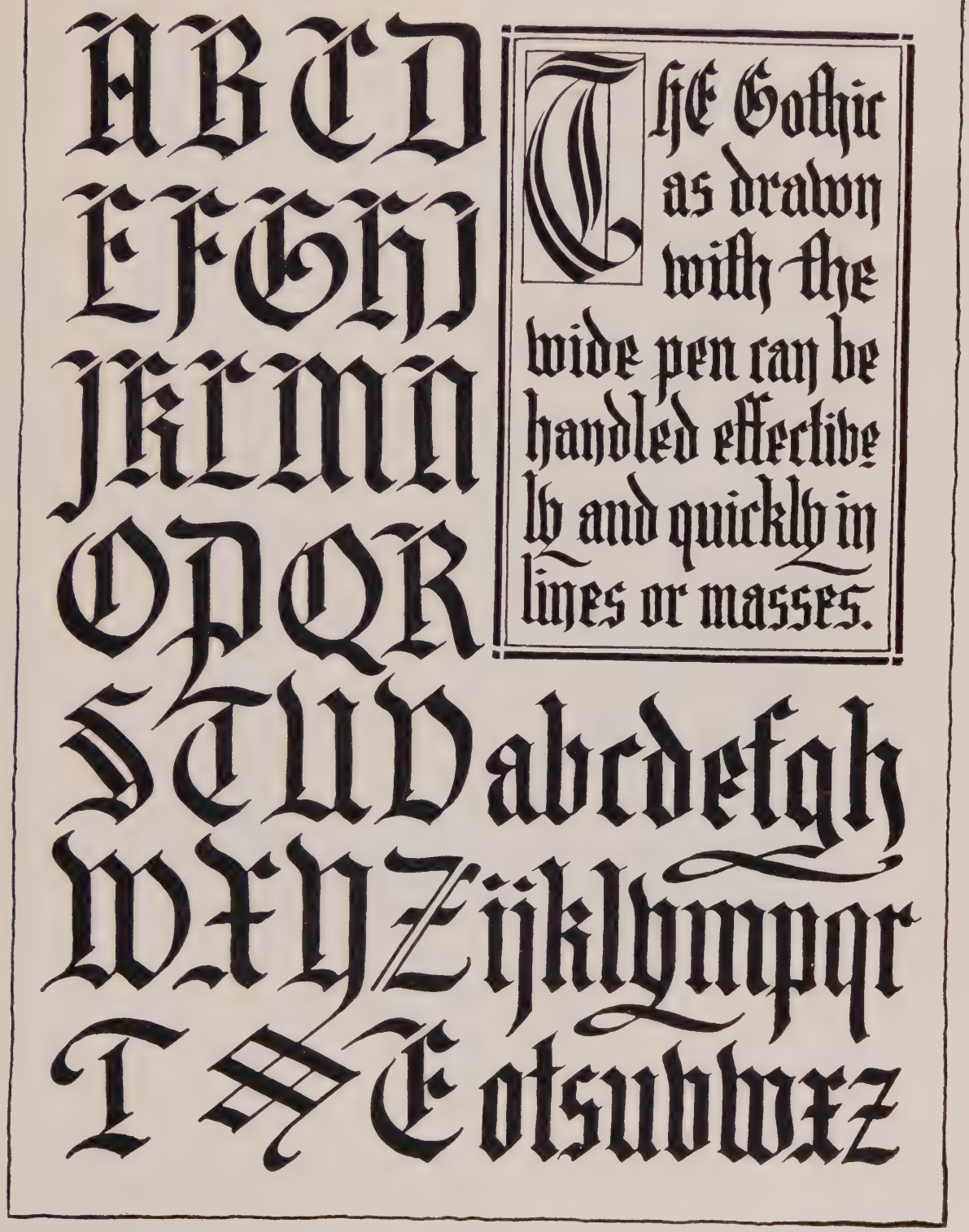
Original variations on a Gothic Alphabet

FIGURE 88



FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN

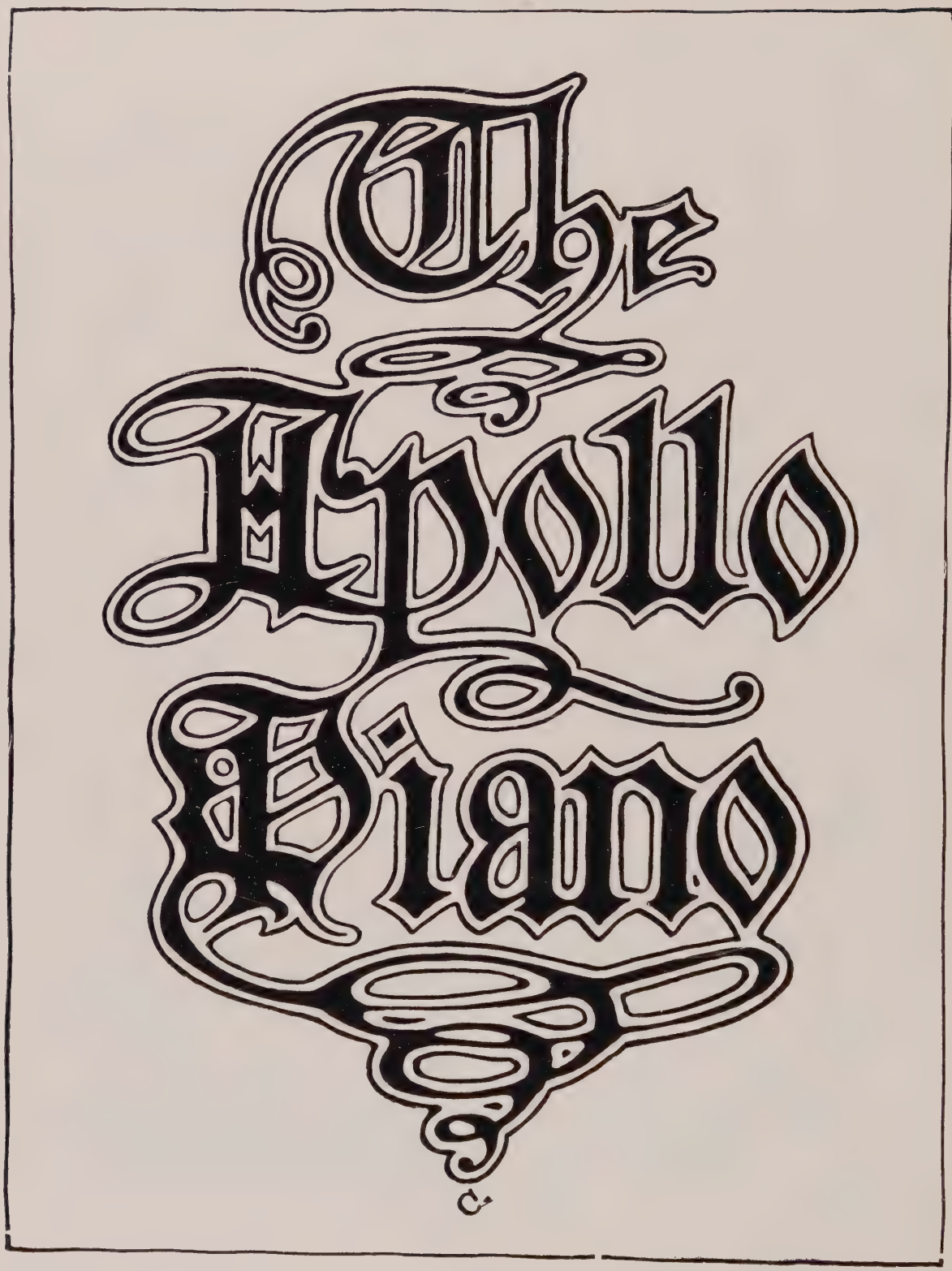
English Gothic Capitals and small letters from "Letters and Lettering"



HARRY LAWRENCE GAGE

Gothic Capitals and small letters written with a wide pen

FIGURE 90



M. ELIZABETH COLWELL

Design in Gothics. The original was printed with the outline in red

A Gothic alphabet based on a fifteenth century manuscript LAURENCE SCHALL

FIGURE 92

The International
Studio
for MAY.
An Illustrated Monthly Magazine of
FINE & APPLIED ART Edited
by CHARLES HOLME Published by
JOHN LANE The Bodley Head at
140 Fifth Ave New York Price 35 cents
Yearly Subscription $3.50 post paid

WILL BRADLEY

Cover design showing an interesting use of Italics

CHAPTER VII

The Practical Problem

WHEN you have chosen the proper style for a given piece of work, you have taken the most important step toward the perfect end. What remains to be done is matter for skill, and skill alone; the choice of the style, the original plan, involves taste and invention as well as skill. Since taste and invention cannot be had from a book we shall make no futile efforts to explain their application. But, eliminating as far as possible the element of personality, a plan of attack may be given.

Let us suppose a problem. A title-page for a privately printed edition is ordered; the copy is as follows:

ANDREA DEL SARTO
Called the Faultless Painter
A Poem by Robert Browning

The copy may be used in full, or only the essential words; information about the printer and publisher should be reserved for the colophon.

The title and matter of the book may suggest an old Italian Gothic, as shown in Figure 86. If the title-page is to be hand lettered, type effects are evidently not wanted, and this letter has not been successfully reduced to type. In fact its best use from the beginning, has been mural and decorative. In spacing it is not extremely flexible; so we assume a simple arrangement of the copy, and fill the short lines with florets in keeping with the letter, and pencil the copy in a close block. The result has a certain "fifteenth-century feeling," but is decidedly black. Some effort may be made to relieve this quality by the use of a rule, leaving considerable white space around the letters, and reducing their size in proportion. Still they are black. We might improve the proportions of the page, but this characteristic would remain. It may be taken to indicate that these letters are best adapted for use in places where strong color contrasts are not to appear, or where great blackness is desired. On a colored cover paper, printed in medium tones, they might serve

better, but to the modern eye they remain somewhat difficult. For reference, let the note be inked in, roughly, as in Figure 93.

Leaving the more formal manner for a moment, we may attempt a simple arrangement using a free Roman capital form derived from the lower-case, Figure 94. This presents the title in a simple, unassuming fashion, and leaves abundant space for decoration of almost any sort. But we cannot fail to see that this is too casual. The right thing is not to be done so easily. However beautifully we may decorate the page, the inscription itself, the central motive, will lack the dignity that is its prime reason for being.

Laying aside, for the present at least, the possibilities of the solid block of capitals, an experiment with a modern form may be made, using the ribbon inscription which is so popular with some English publishers. By this means we succeed in calling proper attention to the words "Andrea del Sarto" and "Robert Browning," setting the subsidiary words back against the field. In this line of work it will usually be found necessary to add something in the nature of floral or conventional pattern, in order to hold the ribbons together; or this end may be accomplished in a still simpler fashion by ruling of an architectural character. Some attraction could easily be added in a little clever handling of the ribbons, giving them an effect of relief; but this, being factitious and apart from any real accomplishment with the inscription, would only carry us still further from our object, which is to arrive by continued experiment at a just and workmanlike solution of the problem.

Looking back at the complete copy, we can scarcely fail to see in the phrase "Called the Faultless Painter," a suggestion leading to the Georgian or Colonial style. A few minutes' work in this direction will produce a sketch similar to Figure 96, possessing a slight resemblance to old work and having about it a quaint sense of variety. While we feel sure this might be improved considerably in detail, it serves to show that the manner and matter do not suit one another, even if we apply no other test than an elementary historical one.

When we experiment with this title in Black-letter, we shall find it profitable to divest the copy of all superficial matter. The average reader has no such aversion to Black-letter as is usually credited to him, but he demands it in small doses, that he may feel its rich, decorative effect without encountering difficulty in reading. Using the copy in its shortest form, and selecting an old English Gothic (following the excellent ren-

FIGURE 93

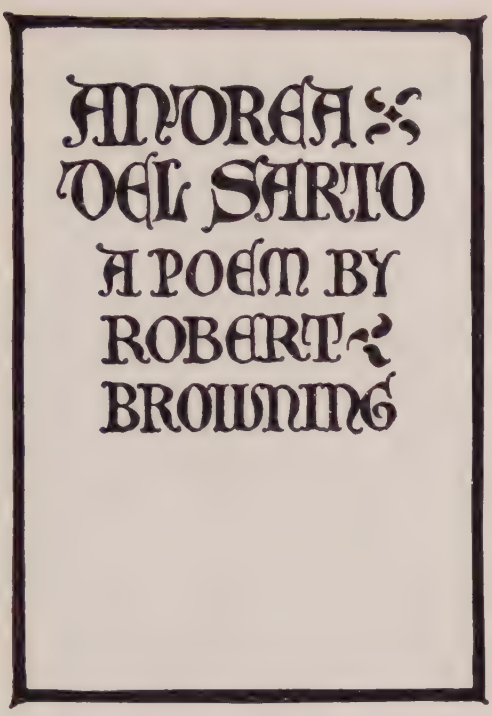


FIGURE 94

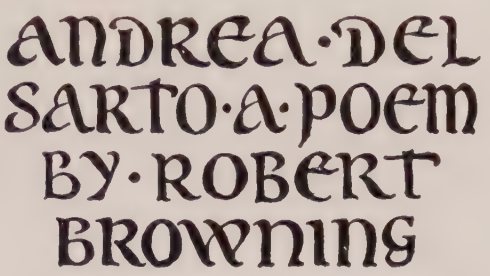


FIGURE 95

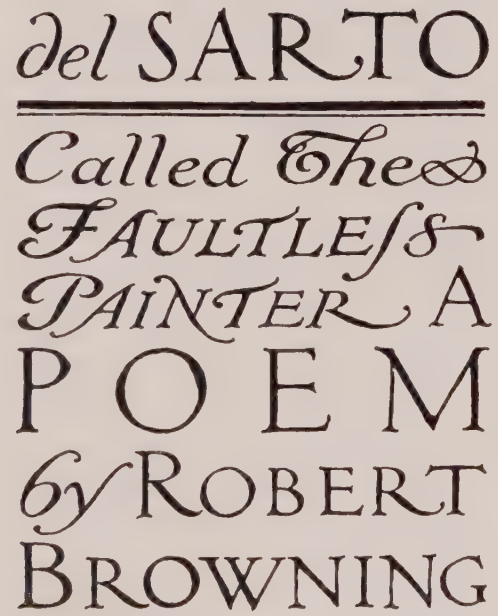


FIGURE 96

T. W. S.

Rough notes for a title page

dering by Mr. Frank Chouteau Brown, Figure 88), we obtain a page similar to that suggested by Figure 97. This is more promising, and a little experimenting in shifting the relative positions of the title words might reveal something still more pleasing.

But there still remains the opportunity to use, in perfect harmony with the text, the Renaissance Roman letter. It will bring up some special

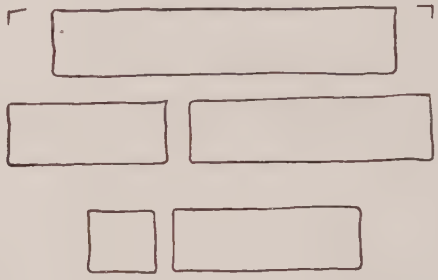


FIGURE 97

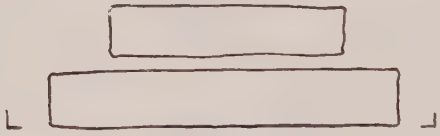


FIGURE 98

difficulties, among them a demand for more careful execution than all the others. It will be plain and not far removed in character from the capitals of some of our best types; in fact the chief advantage over type in the page we propose will be the superiority of free spacing and an absolute choice of proportions.

Beginning with a mere suggestion of the spaces filled by the words we arrive at a note like that shown in Figure 98. This is, of course, one of a large number of possibilities in arrangement, as the optional copy leaves us a wide latitude in that direction. Following this sketch, however, one obtains a page like Figure 99.

The foregoing section, which may seem very elementary to the experienced reader, does not present the only way of arriving at the given con-

FIGURE 99

ANDREA DEL SARTO A POEM

ROBERT BROWNING

T. W. S.

clusion, nor is any single step mentioned either necessary or inevitable. But for the craftsman whose work in this field is beginning, some specialized, concrete exemplification of principles must be made.

From this we may deduce a more general expression. In any piece of lettering the object to be achieved is the presentation of a given inscription in the most suitable and beautiful manner. That the inscription may be suitable and beautiful, we should first determine its relative importance. If it be the vital part of the design in which it stands, everything else should be subordinated to it. If it be merely explanatory, nothing can excuse the arrogance which permits the lettering to draw attention from the main issue. When the value of the inscription is determined, its placement must be effected in exact accord with this, regardless of the temptation to "give the lettering a show."

For beauty, harmony between the lettering and ornament is of course essential. But since each problem presents this question anew, the general principles could scarcely be presented except in connection with a study of ornament. The discerning student will of course recognize that a decision on the basis of historical association cannot fail to be helpful; he will also see that the Romans represent the plain form, that Gothics bring into the inscription a sense of elaboration, and Italics a feeling of script-like informality.

CHAPTER VIII

Phases of Letter Design

JUST as the forms of letters are strongly influenced by the manner of their making — building-up or writing — so their values as ornament have been similarly affected. The styles which attained their height in carved stone, as the classic Roman, carry with them the mark of the architect, and incidentally are still preserved in their purity by architects.

The carved letter, when rendered on paper, naturally becomes a built-up letter. It suggests dignity and permanence. The Italic forms, more swiftly written, suggest grace and informality. One has only to use the different forms as head lines for a body of small letters, in order to see how strongly each manifests its character. With the Roman capitals, the whole inscription takes on an air of sober regularity, as of Roman building; with the Gothic, a richer and more decorative look, suited, by long typographical association, to churchly uses; and with the Italic, the whole inscription becomes more casual, perhaps even, if the Italic be flourished, fantastic and gallant.

These characteristics of the various letters should of course be used to the advantage of the work to be designed. But the letters themselves may offer decorative possibilities beyond those of mere association.

In type, each letter has its own field, and its own work to do. Begin drawing it, and you find that it may also fit itself into a piece of ornament. Carry this a little further, and you begin making ornamental designs, usually monograms and ciphers, out of the letter forms themselves.

In designing pages one often needs a decorative spot to occupy a certain space or "field." One may draw a conventionalized flower form or a bit of abstract ornament, taking care that it harmonize in tone and measure with the letters. Or one may take a certain combination of letters themselves, and weave them into a monogram, equally decorative,

FIGURE 100

A. A. TURBAYNE

Monograms from "Monograms and Ciphers"

and at the same time significant in connection with the rest of the design. In doing this the chief consideration is of course that an interesting spot, a pleasant and effective shape, shall result. But if it is also necessary that the meaning of the constituent letters shall be clear, then their order and legibility have also to be considered.

Facility in arranging monograms and ciphers is so valuable to the craftsman that some time may well be devoted to such practice. Some combinations of letters give happy results with little study; others prove difficult and intractable. For trade purposes, the metal-chaser's method of interlacing flourished Italics is perhaps the easiest and surest, but this arrives at a conventional result, lacking in interest and variety. A legitimate monogram of Roman letters is one in which some stroke of each letter serves also as a stroke in one of the others; and the whole is excellent as it possesses a characteristic shape and a piquant or ingenious division of spaces. In ciphers the idea of interest as ornament is carried still further, legibility without the key to the design being abandoned.

In practical work, one should begin by setting down the letters of the problem in capitals, in small letters, and perhaps in Uncials. Thus all the shapes with which one may play are evident. Take the capitals and try them superimposed, feeling for strokes which may be common to two of the letters; then try them partially superimposed, in a triangle. Some of the most successful monograms are built at the top of a long vertical stem, and are apparently almost symmetrical. If an interesting result does not appear among the capitals, try the small letters; then the Uncials. The monogram should not, as a rule, mix the forms, though occasional fortunate combinations of capitals and small letters, harmonized in a measure by giving the whole an informal treatment, may be found. One should examine the problem to find out how many of the letters involved are symmetrical, or readily reversible. The result, barring the accident of the very easy combinations, will serve as a test of the student's invention, power of design, and knowledge of the letter forms.[1]

Exercises of this sort, which tend to develop in the student a feeling for beauty and design in lettering, are to be highly recommended. In fact, a quickened and critical alertness in regard to all the uses of letters should be cultivated. Fine letter forms are occasionally to be discovered upon

[1] Note. The subject of monograms is well illustrated in Turbayne's "Monograms and Ciphers" (Published by The Prang Company), and in French & Meiklejohn's "The Essentials of Lettering."

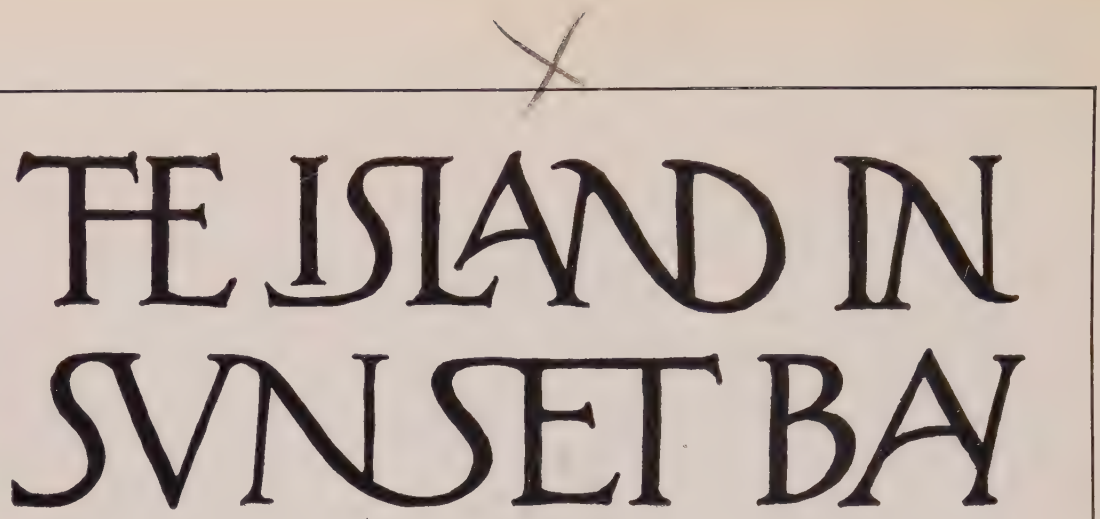
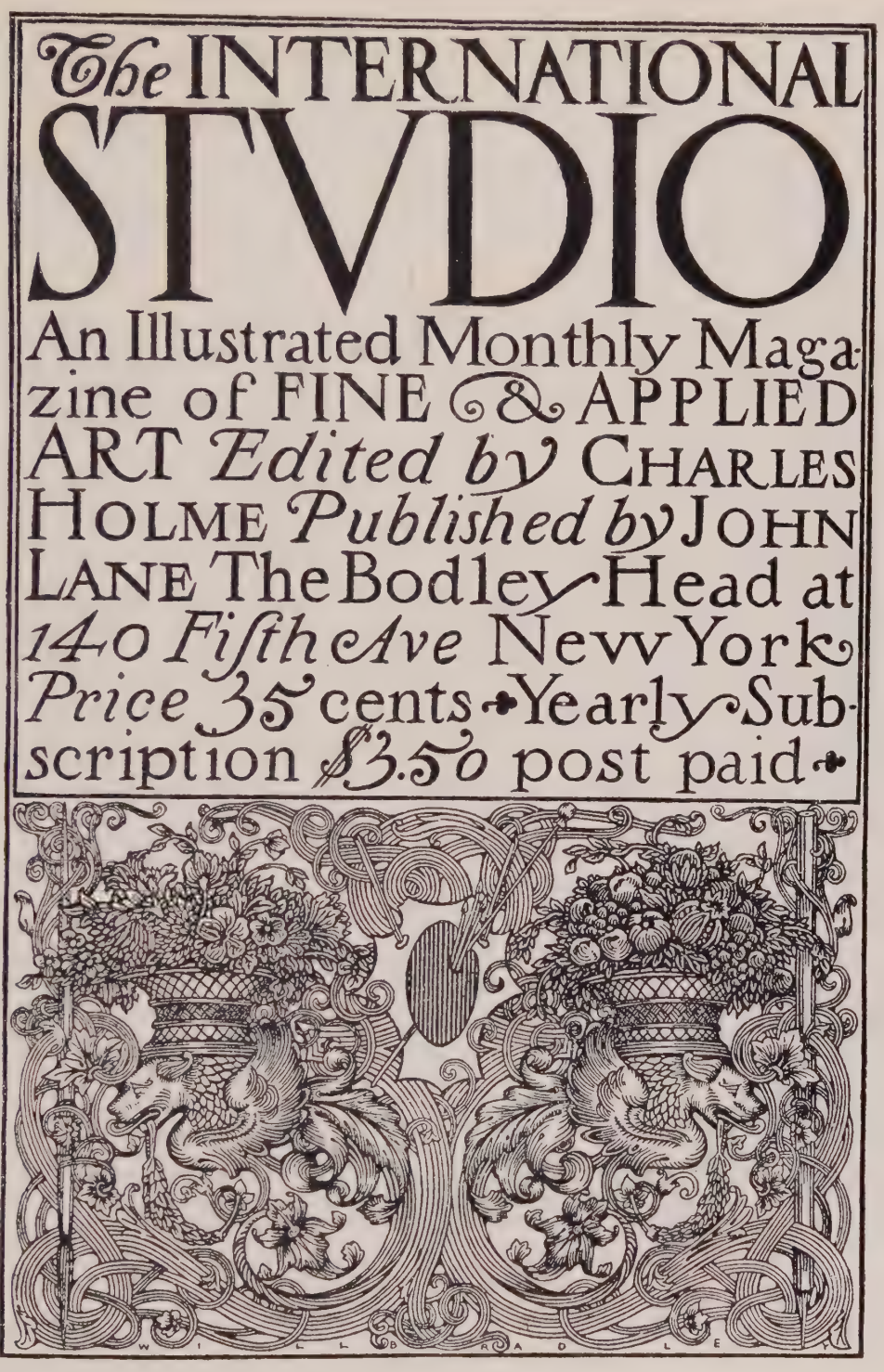


FIGURE 101. *An example of combined letters and monograms in a title*

sign boards and tombstones, and dull and commonplace ones upon pretentious buildings. The most fertile field of observation, especially in recent years, is that of typography. Some of the most skillful living craftsmen adorn with letters the advertising pages of the magazines, and even, in some cases, the advertising cards in the street cars.

Many modern types are of great interest to the letterer. Some of these are not readily obtainable for study, being held as the private property of great presses or of the designers themselves. In this class one might mention the two designs made by William Morris for the Kelmscott Press; the beautiful Doves Press type of Emery Walker; the free and unusual "Humanistic" fount designed by Mr. William Dana Orcutt; Mr. Bruce Rogers' grave and dignified "Montaigne," cut for the Riverside Press; Mr. Ralph Fletcher Seymour's personal type; and a number of the faces designed by Mr. Frederick W. Goudy. Mr. Goudy has gone further, however, and has worked out many faces, all strongly impressed with his personality and craftsmanship, for the regular channels of the trade. These types, and the lifelong experience of authentic artists in the designing of letters which lies behind them, have exercised a deep influence upon current typography. The student will find much to admire in the common work of the day, as well as in the writing of classic and Renaissance masters.

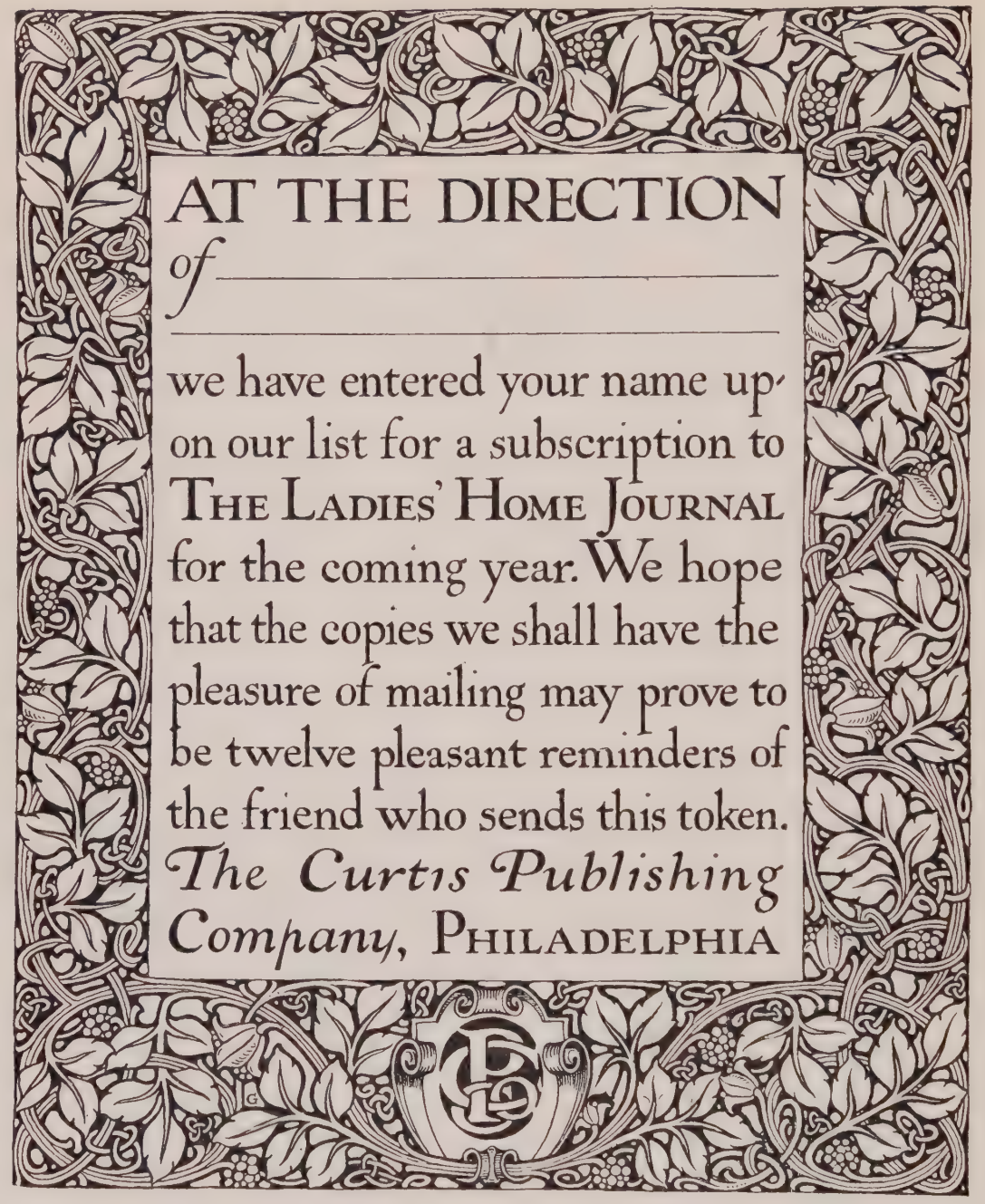
It is, in fact, the strength of present work that requires of the student resourcefulness and a high standard of execution. To be slipshod is out of the question; to be merely correct and impersonal is likewise to fall short. The craftsman who would succeed must contribute achievements at once learned and individual.



WILL BRADLEY

Cover design in the Georgian style

FIGURE 103

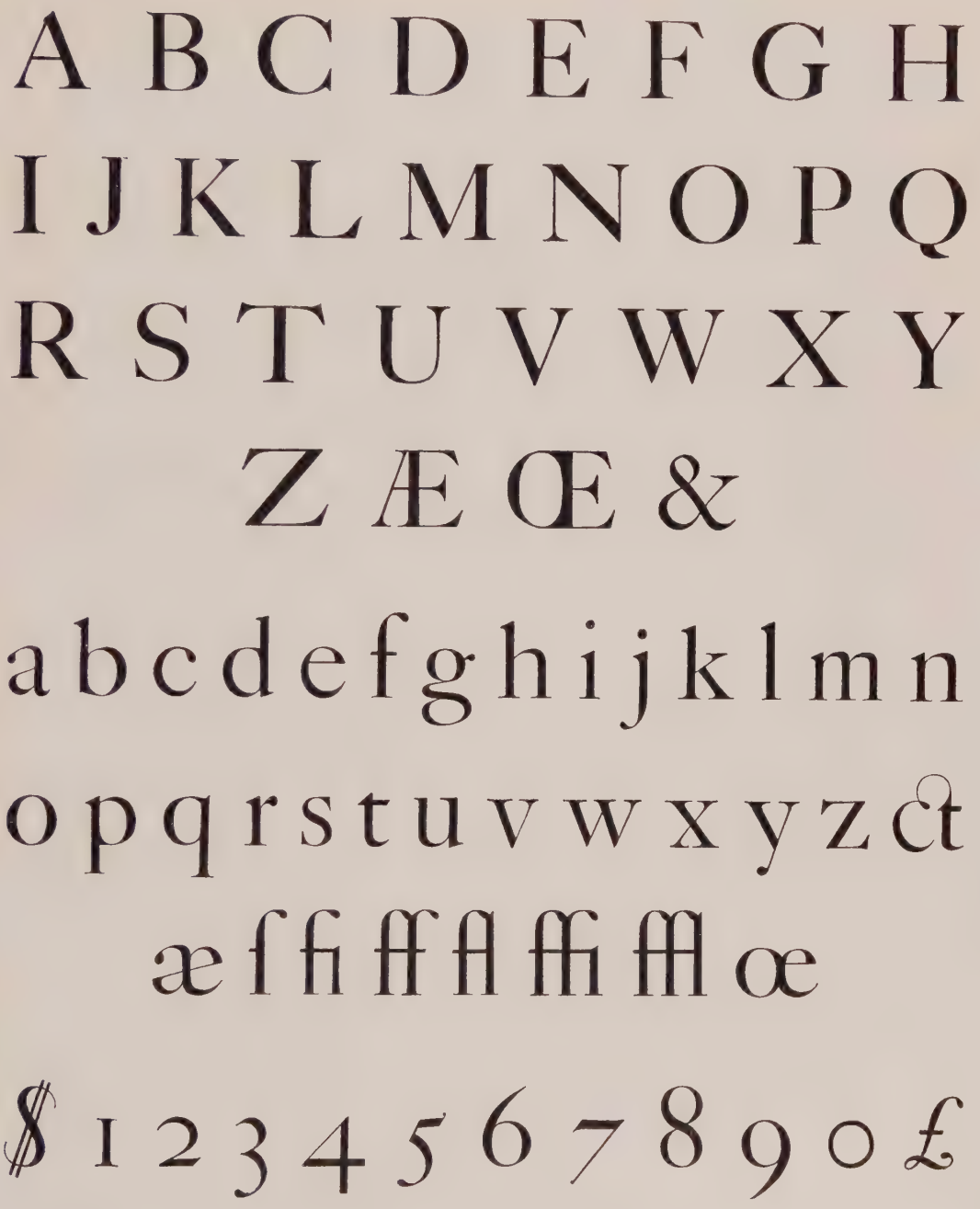

AT THE DIRECTION
of
we have entered your name upon our list for a subscription to THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL for the coming year. We hope that the copies we shall have the pleasure of mailing may prove to be twelve pleasant reminders of the friend who sends this token.
The Curtis Publishing Company, PHILADELPHIA

FREDERICK W. GOUDY

Lettering with border

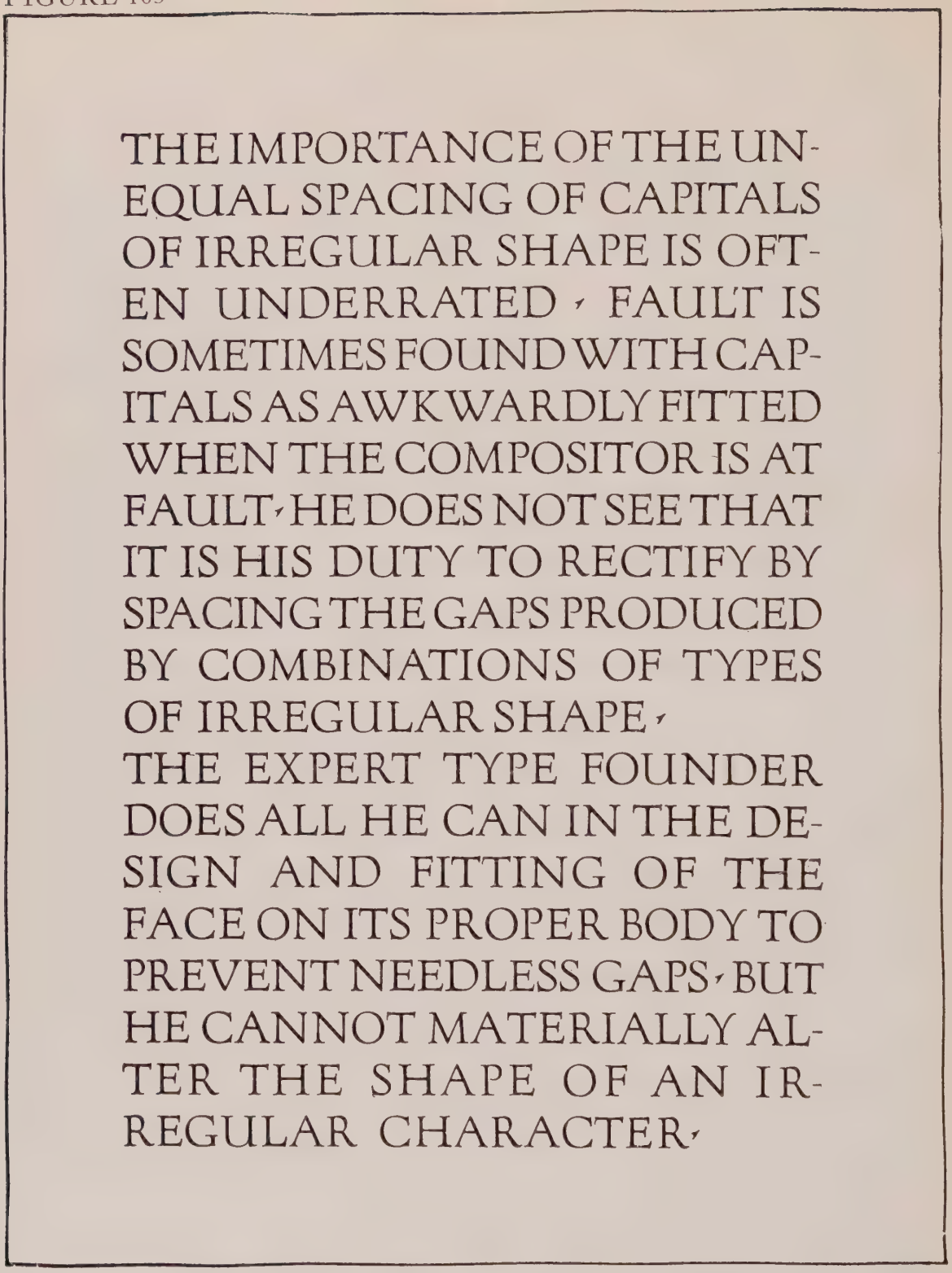
Caslon Oldstyle Roman No. 471

(From the original matrices)



Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company

FIGURE 105


THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UN-
EQUAL SPACING OF CAPITALS
OF IRREGULAR SHAPE IS OFT-
EN UNDERRATED, FAULT IS
SOMETIMES FOUND WITH CAP-
ITALS AS AWKWARDLY FITTED
WHEN THE COMPOSITOR IS AT
FAULT, HE DOES NOT SEE THAT
IT IS HIS DUTY TO RECTIFY BY
SPACING THE GAPS PRODUCED
BY COMBINATIONS OF TYPES
OF IRREGULAR SHAPE,
THE EXPERT TYPE FOUNDER
DOES ALL HE CAN IN THE DE-
SIGN AND FITTING OF THE
FACE ON ITS PROPER BODY TO
PREVENT NEEDLESS GAPS, BUT
HE CANNOT MATERIALLY AL-
TER THE SHAPE OF AN IR-
REGULAR CHARACTER,

FREDERICK W. GOUDY

Forum Type

KENNERLEY OLD STYLE

Mr. Bernard Newdigate writing on "British Types for Printing Books" in The Art of the Book, has to say of Mr. Goudy and the Kennerley type: Intelligent study of Italian models also gives us the Kennerley type designed by the American, Mr. Goudy. This type is not in any sense a copy of early letter, it is original. Besides being beautiful in detail his type is beautiful in the mass; and the letters when set into words seem to lock into one another with a closeness common in the letter of early printers, but rare in modern type. Since the first Caslon began casting type about the year 1723, no such excellent letter has been put within reach of English printers. (This is 24 pt. size.

FREDERICK W. GOUDY

Kennerley Old Style Type

FIGURE 107

Pabst Oldstyle

ABCDEFGHI

JKLMNOPQ

RSTUVWXY

ZÆŒ&£

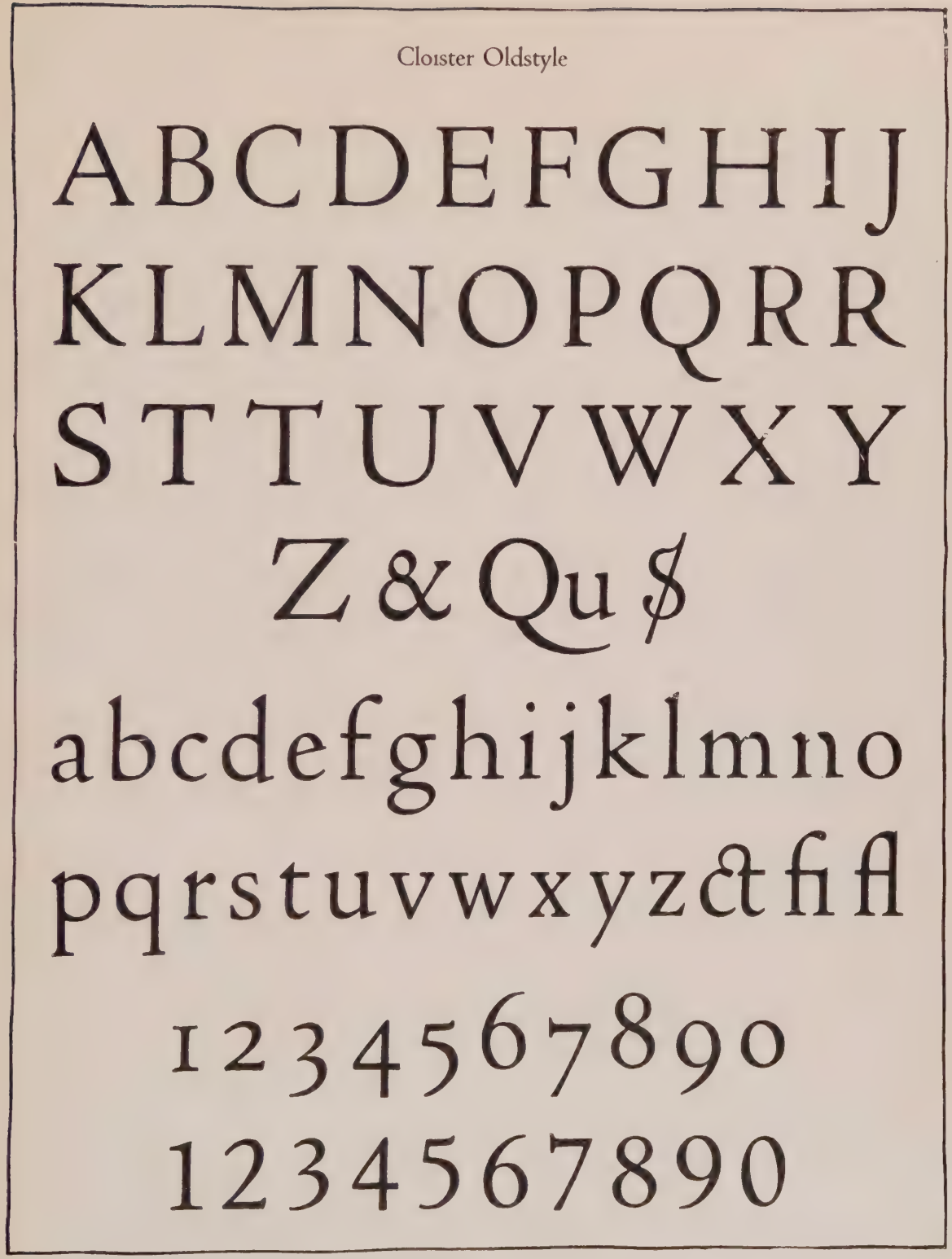
abcdefghijklmnop

qrstuvwxyzæœſtſt

fl ffl *The and of* fi ffi

$1234567890

Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company



Courtesy of the American Type Founders Company